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SELECT VIEWS
OF
THE LIFE, REIGN, AND CHARACTER
OF
FREDERICK THE GREAT,
KING OF PRUSSIA.

Containing, besides many profound Remarks on the prominent Features of the Reign and Character of that unrivalled Sovereign, SERVING TO ILLUSTRATE HIS POSTHUMOUS WORKS, two very remarkable Letters of the Empress of Russia to the Author; a great Variety of Anecdotes, relating to eminent political and literary Characters of Great Britain, and other Countries; and also an authentic Exposition of the ORIGIN and TRUE CAUSES of the BRITISH ALLIANCE WITH PRUSSIA, &c. &c.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN OF

Dr. de ZIMMERMAN,

First Physician to his Britannic Majesty at Hanover,
Knight of the Russian Order of Wlodimir, and
Member of several Literary Societies.

BY MAJOR NEUMAN,

OF THE NASSAU GUARDS.

V O L. I.

L O N D O N :

**PRINTED FOR HOOKHAM AND CARPENTER, NEW
AND OLD BOND STREET; AND E. NEWBERRY,
CORNER OF ST. PAUL'S CHURCH YARD.**

1792.

TO

HER ROYAL HIGHNESS
THE DUCHESS OF YORK,

THIS WORK,

IS

MOST RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,

BY

THE AUTHOR.

..... i .

5

A L I S T
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SELECT

P R E F A C E

OF THE

T R A N S L A T O R.

THE author of the following work ranks high among the German writers of genius and taste. His treatises on *National Pride*, and *Medical Experience*, are translated into almost every European language. His book on *Solitude*, is a treasure of philosophical researches into the inmost recesses of the human heart, written under the dictates of the warmest sensibility and love of mankind, in a style full of elegance and vigour*. The performance, which I presume to introduce to the English public, is the last, but not the least commendable of his works. It contains many a striking, shrewd and wise remark on one of the greatest men

* An English translation of this eminent work has been lately advertised in the Public Advertiser, and other newspapers. But I am sorry to find, that it is a translation of a French translation, not distinguished for the merit of fidelity, among the crowd of Gallic versions.

men that ever adorned a throne, drawn from the purest sources of historical information. The circumstances from which it originated, are not less remarkable than itself.

During Frederick's last illness, the author, for some time attended this great King. His personal acquaintance with him had commenced many years before, when a cruel operation, which he was forced to undergo, obliged him to stay some months at Berlin. The veneration, with which the exploits of the Hero, and the talents of the Philosopher and Poet had filled Zimmerman's mind, was increased by his acquaintance with the man, and grew, if possible, during his attendance on Frederick in his last sickness.

Frederick had scarce breathed his last, when Count Mirabeau prostituted the most wonderful abilities, to slander the departed monarch, in his Work, entitled; *On the Prussian Monarchy, &c.* and his Letter, presented to Frederick William the Second, the day of his accession to the throne. The many falsehoods and indignities, in these performances, interwoven with some sublime and important truths, by the master-hand of one of the first writers of the age, roused every friend of Frederick; and Dr. Zimmerman, who had some time before published his *Conversations with this great King*, during his last illness, arose to vindicate him. He published in the year
1788,

1788, a Treatise, *On Frederick the Great*, which, in a very short time, went through four different editions. The Berlin informers, who had suggested to Count Mirabeau all the false and slanderous matter of his former works, could not remain silent. They set a prompting and dictating again, and Mirabeau wrote his *Secret History of the Court of Berlin*, a strange collection of *picturæ famosæ*, drawn by the meanest daubers, but coloured with all the master-skill of Titian, or Correggio. After this monstrous composition had made its appearance, Dr. Zimmerman was urged, by many friends of Frederick, to enlarge his former work into an ample vindication of this matchless Prince, from the undeserved censure and aspersion of his slanderers. In compliance with their wish, and under the powerful assistance of Baron Horst, the bosom-friend of Frederick, and Count Herzberg, his famous minister of state, he composed this Work, which was published last year at Leipzig, in three volumes, small octavo. As the third volume contains the author's conversations with Frederick the Great, mentioned before, and some chapters are swollen by Dr. Zimmerman's altercations with other German Literati, totally uninteresting to the English reader, by cutting off this heterogeneous matter, and omitting those conversations, &c. I have been able to contract into *two volumes*, 12mo. the original work, without curtailing it in any way injurious to its real value.

Such

Such is the origin of this work, which, though not a complete History of Frederick the Great, represents him in the most striking points of view, and in the most prominent situations of his life, with correctness, impartiality and truth. Great as its worth is, in this respect, it receives, however, an additional value from two authentic letters, written by the Empress of Russia, to the author, wherein this Princess vindicates her own character, no where less understood than in this country; from the strong light in which, besides several other great men, Count Herzberg appears, this great Prussian minister of state, so ill-judged of here, by *party-mad* politicians, and even in a late debate in the House of Lords, so grossly misrepresented by a noble Viscount; from the statement of the true causes, and origin of the alliance between England and Prussia, and of many other important political events; and, lastly, from the great number of interesting and well founded anecdotes, concerning eminent public and literary characters of this and other Countries.

I humbly conceive, that all these distinguished advantages, which procured to the original the most favourable reception on the continent, cannot fail to ingratiate this publication with a British Public: and I venture to hope, that those politicians, whose minds but too eagerly swallowed the delicious *French* poison, distilled by the late Mirabeau, will not reject the genuine *German* antidote, held out to them in this performance.

TO

HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS

THE DUKE OF YORK,

BISHOP OF OSNABURG,

&c. &c. &c.

THIS WORK,

IS

MOST RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,

BY

THE TRANSLATOR.

SELECT VIEWS, &c.

CHAP. I.

Introduction, Plan, and Sources of this Work.

FREDERICK's history is not yet exhausted. Many a great and benevolent action of this matchless monarch is not yet recorded. There is a kind of immensity and inexhaustibility in such a life and such a character; you seek, and search, and find no end. His life, reign, and character, will be an object of curiosity and research even in ages the most re-

Vol. I.

B

mote,

mote, and studied by men, whose ancestors are yet unborn.

There is but one man fit to be Frederick's Tacitus, and the architect of his immortality's temple*. But all his cotemporaries may collect and gather materials
for

* This man is count Herzberg, the old friend and minister of Frederick the Great. He wrote me the 12th of April, 1788. " Si je ne croyois pas devoir sacrifier mon temps aux affaires essentielles & necessaires de E'tat, je pourrois peut-etre composer l'histoire de Frederick II. la plus sure, la plus complete & la plus instructive pour le genre humain, qui existe, parceque j'ai manié les principales affaires sous lui depuis 1745, jusqu'à sa mort & que j'ai toutes les archives sous ma disposition. Je verrai ce que la providence me permettra de faire ; en attendant j'amasse des materiaux." " Did I not think myself obliged to devote my time to the management of essential and necessary state-affairs, I could perhaps write the most true, complete and instructive history of Frederick the II. because I have managed, under him, his principal affairs since 1745, till his death. I shall see what providence will permit me to do ; mean while I am gathering materials."

for this temple, before the torrent of time
passes over them, and sweeps them away.

I have selected and laid up in this work
some such materials, not picked up in the
coteries of Berlin, nor gleaned in coffee-
rooms and public-houses, from waiters,
and the liveried or unliveried gentry of
taverns. An intimate acquaintance with
baron Horst, the bosom friend of Freder-
ick, and for many years his confidential
minister of state, has furnished me with
a great number *; for many I am indebted

B 2

to

* Innumerable letters from the king to baron Horst, I have
not only heard of, not only seen, but perused; during my stay
with the baron in June and December, 1786. The last letter
of Frederick was of the 10th of August, 1786, and of course of
the last post-day before the king's death, or thereabout. The
collection of these letters is a cabinet-stock of the highest value;
but very few of them would bear communication.

to count Herzberg, the marquis Luchefini, now Prussian ambassador at Warsaw, and to generals and other eye-witnesses of Frederick's exploits; some I owe to persons of the highest rank, whom it would be indiscreet to name, and a few observations, scattered through this work, I made myself during his last illness, when standing before his arm chair, in awful silence; I saw the hero, and the king, struggle with the man; or in moments more calm and serene, with the royal philosopher and politician I conversed, upon topics highly interesting, but sometimes such as would be glaring impropriety to bring before the public.

What

What I have to say about this great king, will but too often clash with the reports of his historiographers, anecdotists, panegyrists, *character-painters*, and *character-daubers*. But my every censure shall be mild and gentle, except with those who deserve a severe correction, and in cases of such gross misrepresentation and arrogance, as made count Mirabeau say, "The Prussian monarchy will never ripen to maturity, but moulder away*." Truth is my only care; and my only aim. Equidistant from his idolaters and his slanderers, I wish to represent to my readers, Frederick, such as he really was: He, no doubt, was a great man; but a great man is not a man without faults.

B 3

C H A P.

* Histoire secrete de lacour de Berlin, Vol. 2. p. 78.

C H A P. II.

*On Frederick William the First; on the
Character of his Reign, and its Influence
over that of his Son.*

COUNT Guibert, in his panegyric on Frederick the Great, tells us, that Frederick William the First had been nicknamed the corporal among the kings, and count Mirabeau seems even to suppose, that he had been rather a little crack-brained*.

Frederick William made his first campaigns under Marlborough and Turenne; and these heroes, I think, did
not

* De la monarchie Prussienne, Vol. 1. p. 86.

not form corporals of their royal pupils. He was in the battle of Malplaquet, and followed Charles XII. in all his campaigns in Pomerania. Seated on the throne, he certainly preferred the olive of peace to the laurels of war. But his enjoying the happiness of not being forced to a war, proves by no means that he was unequal to the task of superintending and conducting its great concerns. Among his papers were found elaborate plans of campaigns, to which the succession to the principalities of Juliers and Bergen, if contested, would have compelled him. Such plans we do not find among the papers of corporals.

His

His great endowments and abilities were best known to his successor, and he was their most candid judge. His education was even worse than the common tuition of heirs apparent to a crown. His mind, however, was great enough, without the least instruction, to conceive and execute plans, some of which would have done honour to a Colbert, others to a Sully.

He established, in his dominions, manufactories of the greatest importance. Those of wool, which he introduced, employ, at this very moment, millions of hands. He first subjected every branch of the public revenue, to the strictest order and control. Encouraged by him, agriculture and husbandry

bandry made such progress, as without him they could not have made during two generations.

He is unjustly charged with having hated the profession of a merchant; and fancied that it did not agree with the organization of his state. But he made a distinction betwixt the real merchant, whom he favoured and supported*, and the innumerable herd of petty traders, whom, as they hawked and retailed nothing but foreign commodities, he did not think worthy of protection.

Before

* The well-known house of Splitgerber and Daun was established at Berlin under his particular protection.

Before Silesia, East Frisia, and West Prussia, were joined to the Prussian monarchy, it contained about three hundred towns. If we suppose that in each of them lived ten such traders, we suppose a great number indeed. But even this number was far exceeded by those, who, for their whole subsistence, or the main part of it, depended on inland manufactures, and were more than a million. Frederick William did not think it just and prudent to deprive a million of his subjects of their subsistence, that a much smaller number of pedlars might prosper. It was his opinion, that these traders could live as well by selling inland manufactures, as by dealing only in foreign articles. Politicians are very
often

often at odds with commerce and trade. The petty traders were angry with Frederick William, and the hawkers complained bitterly against him.

Truly great was Frederick William's thought, that a king never acquires a more desirable security for himself, or greater interest and weight with other potentates, than by a well-stocked treasury. Mr. Fisher, a professor at Hall, and author of a good history of Frederick the Great, assures us, "That Frederick William's treasure in the year 1731, consisted of thirty-one millions of dollars, and in the year 1740, of seventy-two*." Others speak even of a hundred millions.

* History of Frederick II. Tom. 1. p. 41.

lions. In the posthumous works of Frederick the Second, we find, however, these very words, "The late king left eight millions, seven hundred thousand dollars, spare money *."

A professor certainly cannot give us as good an account of a treasury's stock as the king, its proprietor and possessor, or even as those who keep the keys of the treasury, and see its accounts. However, we may venture to assert, that the professor is right, and Frederick's posthumous works are wrong.

It is incredible, that Frederick the Second, with his own hand, should have written, that his father had left no more than

* *Oeuvres posthumes de Frederick II.* Vol. 1. p. 26.

than eight millions and seven hundred thousand dollars. The ingenious Denina * touches this point with the wary prudence of a man who cannot help believing what he ought to believe. A minister of Frederick the Great told me, smiling, "These eight millions and seven hundred thousand dollars, are either
 " a blunder of the copiest, or an error of
 " the press; for the mistake in the sum
 " is palpable and obvious."

The reasons on which he founded this assertion, had great weight with me, and, I dare say, will have the same with the historians of the present time, and of future ages.
 " Whoever has the least knowledge of
 " the Prussian finances, said he, must
 Vol. I. C " know,

* *Essay sur la vie de Frederick II.* Berlin, 1788. P/ 51.

“ know, that Frederick William the I. to-
 “ wards the end of his reign, laid by yearly
 “ more than one million, three hundred
 “ thousand dollars. Suppose now that
 “ since 1720, he treasured up but one mil-
 “ lion per annum ; this would make twice
 “ as much and more than the eight millions
 “ mentioned in Frederick’s works. But a
 “ much greater sum flowed yearly into the
 “ treasury, from what was called the re-
 “ cruiting fund, to which every one of
 “ his subjects was obliged to contribute.
 “ The yearly amount of this sum was only
 “ known to his minister Marshal and coun-
 “ sellor Trautzettel. This counsellor
 “ held the keys of the treasury, and no one
 “ but he and Marshal knew how much
 “ the king laid by annually.”

The

The silver and gold plate which he left in the palace of Berlin; the fourteen silver chandeliers in the white saloon and the gallery, the biggest of which weighs eight and twenty hundred weight; the silver glass frames, some of which are of six hundred weight; the silver tables, of still greater weight; the silver box in the hall, fit to receive eighteen musicians; the golden furniture in the queen's state-room, are of immense value, which none of them were melted down in the first or second Silesian war; which certainly would have been done, if the treasure of Frederick William the First had consisted of no more than eight millions and seven hundred thousand dollars.

With the same prudence which made him provide a great treasure, he acted, as all Europe knows, in creating and disciplining his army. As king, therefore, he deserves, upon the whole, to stand in high estimation with posterity; but considered as a man, he was certainly far from being amiable, and the least so when he took it in his head to handle with his cane the periwig of a French clergyman*. His neglected education, and his eternal drilling and training his soldiers, gave his character some asperity and roughness. His ideas of right and wrong were not always very clear. He often fancied himself to be right, when he

* *Souvenirs d'un Citoyen par Formey*, Berlin, 1789.
Vol. I. page 89.

he was perfectly in the wrong; and it cannot be denied, that in the true spirit of the manners of yore, instead of the sceptre, he would sometimes sway the stick*. Ingenious and acute of mind he was, however, in an eminent degree, and by no means a thickskull, as count Mirabeau seems to think. His last will is full of matter which raises astonishment. Baron Shlieftedt, minister to the late

C 3

duke

* “ Le roi, mécontent de quelque sentence portée par une chambre de justice, fit ordonner à tous les membres de se rendre chez lui à un heure marquée. Ils comparurent, et à mesure, qu’il en entroit un, le roi rassoit vigoureusement, en lui reprochant son iniquité.” “ The king, displeased with some sentence passed by a court of judicature, ordered all its members to appear before him at a certain hour. They did, and every one, as he entered the room, got a fine drubbing from the king, accompanied with severe reproaches of his injustice.” *Souvenirs d’un citoyen, Tom. I. page 84.*

duke of Brunswick, in the capacity of an
 envoy of his court, was present at the
 opening of this will, and told a friend of
 mine, that in the testament of king Fre-
 derick William the First, he found the
 following words : “ All my lifetime, in
 “ order to foil the envy of the house
 “ of Austria, I have been obliged to hang
 “ out two passions, which I never had,
 “ namely, a foolish avarice, and an extra-
 “ vagant fondness for tall soldiers. ’Twas
 “ but out of compassion to these glaring
 “ weakneffes, that I was allowed to gather
 “ a great treasure, and to raise a strong
 “ army. Both of them exist ; and my
 “ successor has no more occasion for a
 “ mask. Among my papers will be found
 “ an account, which proves, that my first
 “ battalion

" battalion of guards costs me exactly
 " as much as six regiments of infantry.
 " If, therefore, this battalion be put on
 " the common war establishment, and, in
 " compliment to my memory, their pay
 " increased a third, my son may raise
 " new regiments of infantry without any
 " additional expence."

The publication of a testament, which
 contains things so honourable to the tes-
 tator, and so little expected, were a mark
 of respect which should not be denied to
 a king, who, with such unwearied appli-
 cation and steadiness, pursued his wise
 plan. Frederick the Great followed
 the advice of his father, in the very
 first days of his reign, and took into
 his

his service six regiments, whom the then tutelar administration of Wirtembergh was about to disband.

Notwithstanding all the advantages of the reign of king Frederick William the First, and the great respect which Frederick the Second felt for his father, and testified by many immortal monuments, it cannot be said, that, in the most important concerns of government, the father was an absolute model for the son. Frederick the Second approved of and followed the political maxims of his father. Prussia, with out a strong army, is but a state of little consequence in the eyes of the great European powers : a great stock of money is necessary for maintaining a strong

strong army, and making it useful: an increase of population is likewise requisite for that purpose; and this in the Prussian dominions cannot be obtained, but by raising and increasing manufactories, which give employment and subsistence to millions.

The son believed, as well as the father, in all these fundamental principles. But wholly dissimilar, and much more expanded, was the horizon of the son's mind. Utterly different were his tenets, concerning the means of improving the administration of justice, universal legislature, and particularly those laws, the immediate tendency of which is the best internal policy and happiness of the people.

His

His measures, ideas, and execution with respect to all this, had not the least resemblance to those of his father. Frederick William shewed the way to a wise political œconomy; and his son has proved how much farther it is possible to proceed towards perfection. The keenness of his mind caused him to imitate his father in all his unimprovable regulations. His mighty genius made him original in all the rest.

C H A P.

C H A P. III.

On Frederick's Situation relative to his Father—On his Plan to go to Vienna, embrace the Roman Catholic Religion, and marry the Archduchess Mary Theresa.

FREDERICK WILLIAM was a great prince, but rather too harsh in the expression of his sentiments and feelings. On the parade, he would flog and cane the soldiers ; and once, in a fit of anger, he with difficulty was prevented by the queen, from throwing out of the window the princess-royal, married afterwards to the margrave of Anspach. Frederick, who was neither fond of military shows

shows, nor approved of the ill treatment of the soldiers, avoided, as much as he could, the company of his father; and retired to his favourite - amusements, the reading of French books, making French verses, and playing on the flute *. This was not the way to please Frederick William. But, that a dislike to his great son carried that king so far as to press him to give up his right of succession to the crown in favour of his younger brother, Augustus William; and that Frederick, during his confinement at Custrin, declared to the president Munchow, that he would agree to it, and accept of a pension from his father, under the

* Character of Frederick II. by Mr. Bushing, 2d edit. Hall. 1788, page 179.

the proviso, however, that he were at liberty to spend it in England, or some other foreign country, are assertions of Mr. Bushing,* if not groundless, at least wanting stronger proofs than rumours and tradition. It is unbecoming the dignity of an historian, obstinately to maintain what he is unable to prove.

The famous plot of Frederick's elopement gave his father an opportunity of displaying in the sight of all Europe, his character and his sentiments towards his son. Various are the conjectures about the aim and meaning of this plot. I shall relate the opinions of Frederick's best historians, and subjoin that which seems the most likely to me.

VOL. I.

D

Mr.

* Character of Frederick II. p. 179.

Mr. Denina* supposes, that it was Frederick's intention to go to England, for the purpose of marrying a daughter of George II. afterwards married to the Prince Stadtholder, a princess, as he tells us, highly amiable and extremely handsome. Amiable, for aught I know, she might be; but God forgive Mr. Denina, his assuring us, that she was handsome. A nobleman, who had very often had the honour to see this Princess, and to dine with her, gave the following description of her beauty. “ Her complexion was
 “ very like the colour of Danish leather;
 “ her eyes large and staring; the eye-
 “ lids hanging and so large, that for a
 “ small mouth they could have served as
 “ lips; the mouth very large; the underlip

* *Essai sur la vie & le regne de Frederick II.*
 page 19.

“ derlip dreadfully jutting and pendent ;
 “ the whole face flat and broad ; the
 “ head deep between the shoulders ; her
 “ shape short and thick ; and her speech
 “ extremely quick, indistinct and disa-
 “ greeable.”

Love inspired by bodily charms, could,
 of course, not actuate Frederick. With
 more probability, says Mr. Fisher,* that
 he was determined to go to England by
 his wish to remain independent of the
 Austrian system, and to disappoint
 Marshal Seckendorf, who endeavoured
 to persuade his father, to betroth
 Frederick to the Emperor's niece,
 Princess Elizabeth Christine of Brunf-
 wick, whom he was obliged to marry af-
 terwards. But George II. at that time,

D 2

clove

* History of Frederick II. vol. i. page 9.

elope as fast to the Austrian system as Frederick William, and, consequently, Frederick could not expect to find more independence from that system at London than at Berlin. Nearly connected as Frederick William was, both with England and Austria, it is difficult to conceive, how Frederick could think it either necessary to elope to England, for the purpose of marrying an English Princess, or convenient, in order to disentangle himself from a connexion with Austria.

But was it his idea to go to Vienna, there to embrace the Roman Catholic religion, and to marry the Archduchess Mary Theresa; this certainly was one of the greatest thoughts, which his powerful mind ever devised through the whole course of his glorious life, because the
execution

execution of this plan would have prevented many a stream of blood, and totally altered the gigantic course of the eighteenth century. It is likely that this was Frederick's idea, but I cannot pretend to say, it is true.

Frederick the Great was determined to elope from his father. This plan was discovered. His father, enraged to the uttermost, imprisoned him in the castle of Custrin, ordered a court to try him, and several members of this court were of opinion, that he had forfeited his life. This is notorious, and no one doubts it. But what were the reasons which placed his intended escape in so heinous a light, that he, the heir apparent to the crown, to some of his judges, could appear guilty of a crime, that deserved death?

D 3

It

It is known to a certainty, that three young officers were the confidents of the prince royal, and chosen to accompany him in his flight ; namely, Baron Spaan, who previously had set out for Dresden ; Baron Keith, who escaped to Portugal, returned many years after, and died as adjutant-general and master of the horse to Frederick ; and the unhappy Lieutenant Catt, who, under his eyes, was beheaded at Custrin.

It is further doubtless, that the margravine of Bareut, the beloved sister and most intimate friend of Frederick, whose statue, like the image of a goddess, he placed in the temple of friendship at Sans Soucy, was in the secret of the intended escape of her brother, and that she assisted him with her jewels to achieve it.

No

No one doubts also, that Count Seckendorf, the then imperial minister at Berlin, after the king's return from Wesel, where the plot was discovered, did every thing in his power to protect the prince from the vehemence of his father's anger. And highly remarkable it is, that Seckendorf, in all he did, followed but the orders he had received from Vienna, and that he acted so expeditiously, as scarce to have had time to send a messenger to Vienna. Of course, the intention of the prince royal must have been known there before-hand, and Seckendorf was instructed how to act, in case the plot should be discovered, and the hot-headed king fly into that violent passion, which, it was easy, to foresee.

D 4.

More-

Moreover, it is certain, that, as soon as it was known, that this passion had risen to the highest pitch, and Frederick William thought on nothing less than the decollation of the prince, Seckendorf delivered to the king credentials, kept secret till then, by which the emperor declared him his ambassador, and that in this capacity, he demanded an audience, and told the monarch: “The emperor
 “ had ordered him immediately to de-
 “ clare war, if any harsh measure should
 “ be taken against the prince, who, as
 “ prince royal, and born prince of the
 “ empire, was under the protection of
 “ the emperor and the whole empire.”

It is incontrovertible and well known, that at first the king answered the ambassador with much violence: “I am
 “ master in my dominions and my house;”
 but

but afterwards recollected himself and pardoned the prince, whose marriage with the before-mentioned niece of the emperor, was then agreed on between Frederick William and Seckendorf.

A marriage of Frederick with Mary Theresa, held out every prospect of grandeur and prosperity to the house of Austria, and answered much more the views of the Imperial court, and promised quite another support of the *pragmatic sanction*, than the alliance with the house of Lorrain, which was afterwards contracted. Thus; perhaps, in a secret negociation with the court of Vienna, originated Frederick's plan of marrying Mary Theresa, the heiress of all the Austrian dominions. No one was more able to conduct this negociation

D 5

than

than Seckendorf, a crafty and successful negociator*; and Frederick had certainly no objection to the emperor's chief and first condition, a change of religion, as he really laughed at all religions whatever.

That

* "Frederick," says Mr. Fisher, "hated Seckendorf and the whole Austrian party at his father's court." Frederick, it is true, speaks of Seckendorf in terms of disgust and contempt, and calls him an usurer, with whom lies were so current, that he entirely lost the use of truth. But Frederick's dislike to Seckendorf, arose later from an opinion, either that Seckendorf had misled him, or that he had not seconded the views of the Imperial court with becoming activity and zeal, he being a zealous Protestant, and, of course, detesting the very idea of a Protestant prince becoming a Roman Catholic. Against the Imperial court he was set much later by the almost incredible machinations of this court, discovered a short time after his father's death, and by the certain information, that even Prussian ministers of state were bribed with pensions by the emperor.

That it was his serious intention to turn Roman Catholic and to marry Mary Theresa, is affirmed by two men of very respectable character, companions and friends of Frederick the Great; Count Munchow, afterwards minister in Silesia, and General Bork. Baron Horst remembers very well to have heard it related, by these two noblemen, both friends of his father.

And this it was, which enraged Frederick William the First to such a degree, that, for some time, it seemed nothing but the blood of his son could expiate his crime. Frederick William, in the true spirit of the Heidelberg catechism, looked upon the mass as the most diabolical idolatry, stuck dreadfully stiff to the orthodoxy of his fathers, and would have supposed, that

D 6. every

every Protestant soul in all his dominions, must descend straightway to hell, if his son embraced the Roman Catholic religion; which universal Prussian perdition was happily prevented by the discovery made at Wesel.

It is rather singular, that Mr. Fisher, after having thus strenuously asserted Frederick's design to go to England, at last seems, almost, to be of my opinion. "The marriage," says he, "between Frederick the Second and the princess of Brunswick, was so extremely agreeable to Francis, duke of Lorraine, that he, in person, assisted at the ceremony, because he could not help fearing an alliance between Frederick and Mary Theresa, by which Austria would have obtained at once that end she had struggled for three centuries

“centuries together.” He even adds :
 “This seems to have been the reason,
 “which made Frederick endeavour to
 “decline every marriage during the life
 “of his father ;” and further ; “Fre-
 “derick’s going over to the Roman Ca-
 “tholic religion, would have opened to
 “him a prospect of the greatest state
 “advantages.”

Historians, like philosophers, will sometimes prove, what they are not convinced of themselves : and then, often, they let slip a word which clears up what they wish to obscure. This is strange enough ; but stranger still would it be, if the papers delivered by Seckendorf to the court of Vienna, which I shall mention in another chapter, should entirely clear this matter from that obscurity which I, perhaps, have not been able

able to remove, and very likely the courts of Berlin and Vienna, agreed together not to dispel.

C H A P IV.

*On Frederick's Life before and immediately
- after his Accession to the Throne.*

FREDERICK, when prince royal, to avoid the eternal military exercises of his father, lived as much as he could at Rheinsberg. Amidst all his father's reviews, and his unremitting facing about to the right and the left, Frederick longed to enjoy his books, his vineyard, his cherries, and his melons.

Frederick's dearest amusements were the Belles Lettres, the correspondence
with

with some literati after his own heart and mind, and the conversing with as many men of genius as he could meet with. As for the rest, he made himself merry and run in debt.

His companions, at that time, were chiefly Count Kaiserling, Count Munchow, whom I mentioned before, Count Chazot, and the privy counsellor Jordan. But dearer than all company, were his studies to him. Therefore, he was of nothing more covetous than of his time, constantly employed with sowing in himself the seeds of his future greatness.— Though extremely elegant, he did not conceive how a man could possibly talk of fashions, woman's dress, and woman's concerns, or, engaged with such trifles, fear death, under the iron yoke of *ennui*.
The

The ordinary life of princes and courtiers he did not think to be real life.

Munnick's victories made him uneasy on the soft couch of philosophy. In this uneasiness appeared, methinks, the first marks of Frederick's fondness for high military glory. But, at Berlin, there was no presentiment of his future greatness. All heard of the jovial feasts which he gave at Rheinsberg, of his love for women and musick, of his handsome foot, of his skill in dancing; and all expected, after his accession to the throne, to see nothing but golden days, eternal festivals, plays, operas and masquerades.

Frederick William the First, had not quite the same expectations; when on his death-bed, he said to his queen; "Well, you'll rejoice in my death;—

"now

“ now there will be nothing, you think,
 “ but pleasure and feasts; but, mind
 “ me, at last it will happen other-
 “ wise.” Well, did it happen other-
 wise!

In the beginning of his reign, all his former companions expected nothing less but to share the management of the chief concerns of government. No one was more sure of it than Kaiferling, whom the king called Cefarion, and really loved. On the first tour of King Frederick the Second to Prussia, to receive the homage of his subjects, Kaiferling, and Algarotti, were with him in the same carriage. In order to take possession of the prerogatives of a favourite, Kaiferling overburthened the king with petitions, recommendations, and intercessions of every kind and description.

scription. The king reminded him more than once, that this would not do, and did not agree with his plan of government. Kaiferling did not take the hint, and Frederick would not have him any longer in his carriage. But, as afterwards, at Koenigsberg, the king was overwhelmed with congratulations in prose and verses, he gave them all to Cesarion, saying, "I know that you like to trouble yourself with other people's papers: I wish you would do me the favour to answer all this stuff."

Cesarion's case made all the others cautious, and from that day, the tone of the new government was given. As for the rest, the king behaved no way unfriendly towards Kaiferling, and retained him in his suite.

One

One of Frederick's friends, when prince royal, was *Abbé Solignac*. He came with King Stanislaus, as his almoner, to Berlin, and ingratiated himself into the prince's favour by the uprightness of his sentiments, and his profound and extensive knowledge. Solignac's attachment to the king was uncommon, and sometimes rather singular; for he would oft entreat him, for God's sake, not to have any thing to do with free-masonry. The prince listened to these entreaties with much good-nature, laughed at them heartily, and went to the lodge.

As the king was on his well-known journey to Strasbourg, between this place and Landau, he met a carriage. He bid them ask who was in it? "*Abbé Solignac.*" The king turned directly. "How is it possible," cried the
Abbé,

Abbé, "that I find your Majesty here?"
 "My dear *Abbé*," quoth the king, "I
 am come hither only for the purpose
 of making you a free-mason; all
 the necessary implements I have with
 me, and we'll perform the ceremony
 here in open field."

The good *Abbé* seemed to be very
 much puzzled by this event, but soon
 perceived the joke. A Prussian mini-
 ster has told me this anecdote, which
 he had from the king's own mouth.

CHAP.

C H A P. V.

On Frederick's supposed Grecian Taste in Love.

“**F**REDERICK lost a great deal of
 “ sensual pleasure,” says Mr.
 Bushing, a Prussian ecclesiastic counsel-
 lor, “by his aversion to women; but
 “ he indemnified himself by his inter-
 “ course with men, recollecting from
 “ the history of philosophy, that Socra-
 “ tes was reported to have been very
 “ fond of Alcibiades.*”

Not only Mr. Bushing, however, but
 also Voltaire, la Beaumelle, the Duke de
 Choiseul, innumerable Frenchmen and
 Germans, almost all the friends and
 enemies

* Character of Frederick II. page 22.

enemies of Frederick, almost all the princes and great men in Europe, even his servants,—even the confidants and friends of his latter years, were of opinion, that he had loved, as it is pretended, Socrates loved Alcibiades. And I shall prove that this opinion of all Europe, of all the servants and confidants of Frederick, is a gross mistake, and that they cast an undeserved aspersions upon his character and fame.

Whoever writes on Frederick's life and character, cannot treat a more important subject than this. Perhaps from every quarter they will tell me, that I had better been silent upon so delicate a matter. But, should it be buried in eternal silence, what can and will be said on this subject, the truth would never be known; and, from century to century,

one

one author would copy it from the other, that Frederick loved, as Socrates did Alcibiades.

If Frederick could love thus, thought I often, he was at least not evirated, as many Frenchmen presumed to assert; and, for this reason, I have often heartily laughed at the French lieutenants and ensigns, who, in the beginning of the seven years war, (before the battle of Rosbac, however,) would often say: “How can the marquis of Brandenbourg venture upon any kind of war with us, as he is even unable to sleep with a woman.”

Emafculated was Frederick not, but fix months after his marriage, rescued from death by a cruel chirurgical operation. This was the first and most important of all his cabinet secrets.

Some-

Something must have been rumoured of this operation long before, and caused the report of his emasculation. But it was a glaring contradiction, at the same time, to upbraid Frederick with a Grecian taste in love. I can explain this contradiction in such a manner as will clear his name from an aspersión, which would have been as indelible and immortal as his fame.

Before his marriage, Frederick did not at all dislike women. In these years his constitution rather gave him a strong inclination for the sex. But the rudeness with which his father once treated a handsome lady, suspected to please the prince, withdrew him from what is called love,—deprived him of this heavenly sensation, and drove him to what is not love,—the enjoying of ladies of pleasure.

ture. It was from necessity and principles that afterwards he forsook the fair ; but he never ceased to be greatly amiable, when he was speaking or writing to ladies. All his life time, this amazing man had it in his power to charm every one by an inexpressible civility and gratefulness, if he chose to do it.

At the very time that his father was going with him to Brunswick, there to consummate his marriage, Frederick laboured under a loathsome disease, never more troublesome than at such a time*.

He disclosed his terrible embarrassment to the margrave, Henry of Shwedt. The margrave advised him to apply to his physician at Malchow, who, he said, in a very short time, had often relieved

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him

* A gonorrhoea maligna.

him in a similar situation*. Frederick sent to this man, called the doctor of Malchow, and his complaint was stopped within four days. Frederick fancied himself radically cured, and the quack took care not to undeceive him. He went to Brunswick, and his marriage was consummated.

At first the prince royal was certainly averse to it, because his father forced him to this marriage. But that aversion was very soon done away by the charms of the truly excellent and amiable princess. He conducted her to Rheinberg, and the first six months their union seemed to be blessed with all the happinesses

* Frederick supposing the margrave had given him this advice out of spite, could never abide him afterwards.

ness of the most fortunate connubial state.

A worthy writer is, therefore, much mistaken*, when he assures us, that Frederick lived with his princess in Platonic abstinence. He slept with her every night during the first six months of their marriage. The lady of Baron Veltheim†, then maid of honour to the princess, has certified it to Baron Horst.

These six months were scarcely passed, when the disorder stopt by the quack of Malchow, broke out again with redoubled violence, and many ill symptoms. Frederick was seized with a violent ill-

E 2

ness.

* Mr. Fisher, in his history of Frederick the Second, Vol. I. pag. 9 and 48.

† The father of the late Hessian minister at the British court.

ness. This disease, and especially its cause, was carefully concealed. " 'Twas " but a slight distemper," would they say, in the usual court language. However this slight distemper grew so dangerous, and the gangrene was so very near, that nothing could, and did, save Frederick's life, but a cruel incision.

With a mind, so great and powerful, it was rather error than weakness which made him mistake this kind of emasculation, by no means complete, for that shameful mutilation, which he could not abide. He did not know that a man's character dwindles but then into pusillanimity and cowardice, when, he is evirated by an operation totally different. In this case, certainly the character shrinks into meanness, timidity, peevishness and malice.

malice. Some wit or petty smartness may remain; but gone for ever is all true greatness and vigour of the soul, all briskness, intrepidity and courage. The cruel operation, which saved Frederick's life, was not of that kind, and, therefore, *he* remained what *he* was, a man of the highest mental powers, the greatest and most intrepid hero of his age.

Altogether against his inclination and his will, he saw himself obliged to separate from his highly amiable and dearly beloved princess, and to pretend some natural aversion, caused by a forced marriage. He now publicly professed nothing but the greatest esteem for his princess. But, that no one might suppose him unable to feel all the sensa-

E 3

tions

tions of human nature, (which he certainly felt) for some time he laid hold of every opportunity of declaring his delight in beautiful women. The portraits of charming female dancers are still extant, with which, for this reason, he adorned his apartments.

For the very same purpose he would affect to be highly delighted with obscene pictures. He succeeded in this attempt, chiefly through a very obscene painting, described by Voltaire, though its existence be very erroneously denied by his corrector, Mr. Nicolai*, who presumes to assert, that Frederick the Second never

* Anecdotes of Frederick II. Numb. 3, page 316, 317. Notwithstanding this correction and assertion, Mr. Nicolai tells us, in his description of Berlin and

ver liked, or pretended to like, such pictures, and that, quite to the contrary, as such an indecent, though highly beautiful picture of a satyr, and a nymph by Cignany, was once offered to the king; he called out, at its first sight, "Fye, Fye! away with it!"

The Prussian minister of state, Baron Horst, wrote me, May 3d, 1789: "I remember very well, in the year 1747, to have seen at Potsdam such a picture by Pesne, as Voltaire describes. It hung in the second room from the great saloon, where the officers of the
E 4 guards

and Potsdam, Vol. III. page 1209: "In the royal Gallery at Sans-souci, hung on the third wall, No. 39, the *Surprised Lovers*, by *Giulio Romano*." I saw this picture in the year 1786, in that gallery, and it certainly is one of the most obscene pictures in the world.

“ guards used to dine. But this picture
 “ was far from being the most obscene
 “ in the king’s palaces. In the very
 “ same dining-room of the officers of the
 “ guards, I saw, in the year 1747, a
 “ small painting by Watteau, the most
 “ obscene picture I have ever seen. It
 “ was a naked female figure, whom
 “ a young man approached. This pic-
 “ ture was extremely beautiful. I saw
 “ much more paintings of this kind
 “ in the several palaces of the king,
 “ and you know from me, what rea-
 “ sons Frederick had to set out such
 “ pictures in the first years of his reign.
 “ After the seven years war, many of
 “ these paintings have been removed,
 “ but not all. For even at Berlin hung,
 “ in the ordinary dining-room of the
 “ king, in the last years of his life, the
 “ picture

“ picture of a naked female figure,
 “ which I took to be some Italian copy,
 “ and, if no alterations be made in this
 “ room, it must still hang there in the
 “ corner of the second window from
 “ the door. The picture of a satyr and
 “ a nymph, mentioned by Nicolai, must
 “ have been bought by the king, how-
 “ ever ; for I have seen it hang in that
 “ room, which the old Duke of Holstein
 “ Beck used to inhabit. The companion
 “ to this picture was an old pantaloen,
 “ whose pockets a young girl was search-
 “ ing.”

But pictures were not the only means
 by which the king wished to insinuate,
 that he yet was very fond of women.
 He would also make people believe,
 that he lived in a very intimate con-

nexion with the famous dancer Barberini. Once on a masquerade at Berlin, he walked with her, unmasked, arm in arm; and then retired with this beautiful Italian, into a closet, where they did—nothing but drink tea.

This sweet woman was the only one with whom Frederick the Great, when king, seemed to be in love, and for this reason, her history, without impropriety, may be introduced into the history of such a man. Mr. Denina has done this, without being sufficiently informed. Madam Barberini never returned, as he says, from Berlin to Venice. She never eloped from Berlin with an Englishman; and, consequently, the king could never be influenced by this motive, to have her taken up at Venice*.

The

* *Essai sur la vie et le règne de Frederick II.* p. 114.

The Prussian resident at Venice had engaged her for the opera at Berlin, at seven thousand dollars a year. A contract in due form was drawn up between her and the resident. At the time that this was done, she had quarrelled with her lover, a Scotchman of the name of Mackenzie. The two lovers were reconciled, and Madam Barberini did not choose to fulfil her engagement. The king bid his resident sue her before the senate of Venice. The senate laughed, and refused justice. About that time, the baggage of a Venetian ambassador to the British court, Signor Campello, was passing the Prussian dominions, in its way from Hambrough to London. The king gave orders to arrest it, and to declare at Venice, that nothing of this baggage should be given up, before

E. 6

Madame

Madam Barbarini were surrendered to him. Campello had many near relations in the senate; and this *candid* and *enlightened* court of justice, found now, that the king was perfectly in the right. The fair dancer, duly escorted, was sent by the senate of Venice to the confines of Austria; and thence by the courts of Vienna and Dresden, to the borders of Brandenburg. Mr. Mackenzie followed her every where, but, on the desire of his family, was obliged to leave Berlin, and to return to England. Madam Barbarini soon forgot him; for she pleased the king, and her pay was increased to twelve thousand dollars. She married afterwards a son of the high-chancellor Cocceji, now president of the regency at Glogau, and is still living. Mackenzie, as easily may be conceived, bore

bore an inveterate spite to Frederick, and being a near relation and intimate friend of Lord Bute, inspired him likewise with his implacable hate. It is well known from Frederick's history of the war of seven years, how, towards the end of this war, Bute treated the reviving hero. The refusal of a fair dancer to a favourite of this Lord, had, of course, the same influence upon the conclusion of that war, as a pair of gloves, refused by the duchess of Marlborough, on the end of that for the Spanish succession.

Before and after the time that Frederick was pleased to hang out this affection for the beautiful Barbarini, influenced by the same principle and motive, he displayed the quite opposite disposition

tion of Socratic love.* But this also was nothing but simulation, nothing but a cloak of what he fancied to be nothing less than an emasculation. This fondness for young men he did not only affect before the seven years war, but also after it. But never did he feel this fondness, and never was he guilty of this excess, though he made every effort in his power to

Infamous / per-

* I know very well how it has been proved over and over again, that Socrates was not guilty of this taste in love, so very common in Greece. With the Grecian culture, this taste went along to Rome; then again from Constantinople to Italy, France, England, and Germany. Some years since it found as many admirers at Bern, in Switzerland, as formerly in the cloisters of French Jesuits, and at some *eminently enlightened* German courts. All this I only say, however, for the purpose of explaining my meaning; and I misuse the innocent name of Socrates, that it may be easier to find decent expressions, for a thing so indecent and impure.

persuade the world that he was. In the fourth canto of his Palladion, he openly speaks of this Grecian taste in love with great regard. In the first rank he places Socrates with his Alcibiades; after them, Eurialus and Nisus; and then he says: “All the slanderers of Cæsar were wrong, in calling him the husband of all the married Roman ladies; he, on the contrary, was the wife of their husbands;” and, at the end, he calls even the holy apostle John, a Gany-medes!*

Thus Frederick made use even of blasphemy, to cloak the cure of the Doctor of Malchow. He knew very well, that the world did really believe, what he

* Oeuvres posthumes de Frederick le Grand, Vol. IV. page 92.

he wanted to impose on them. He knew that his pages and servants, all his courtiers in Potsdam and Berlin, his companions, favourites, and all the confidants of his later years, suspected, that he had loved many an handsome youth, not quite so as Socrates did the beautiful Alcibiades, but as the Jesuits, according to his own relation*, so many an handsome scholar of their's. Frederick did not wish to clear himself from this suspicion. By comparing various circumstances, we find, on the contrary, that he encouraged the spreading it wide abroad, with all the power of royalty, not only by honouring with particular favours, young men, who, by their beauty

* *Ceuvres posthumes de Frederick le Grand.*
Vol. IV. page 90, 91, 92.

beauty and daily intercourse with the king, raised such a suspicion, but chiefly, and above all, by granting leave to the bookseller Bourdeaux, at Berlin, almost under the windows of his palace, to print the *Pucelle d'Orleans*, adulterated by *La Beaumelle*. In this publication, printed at Berlin, with the king's approbation, we find that most impudent and satiric passage, which, with the highest cynic perspicuity and clearness, charges the king with the Grecian taste in love. Had it not been Frederick's wish, that all Europe should believe this charge to be true, he would not have permitted such an impudent libel to be printed in the very place of his residence*.—

When

* For the sake of argument, I'll subjoin this passage, leaving out, however, one horrid line. The father confessor

When we further consider how cautious, even in his last illness, Frederick was to conceal that part, which was quite unfit for such Socratic or Jesuitic love, and that it was his will and express order, after his death, not to be undressed, but only to be covered with his military mantle, we may take it, I suppose, to be sufficiently proved, that Frederick, for

confessor of King Charles VII, relates a prophetic vision, discovering to him futurity, recites, in what strange positions he saw the kings of future ages,—says something about George II, and, at last, mentions the King of Prussia with the following words:

Mais quand au bout l'auguste enfilage,

Il aperçut entre Iris et son page.

.

Cet auteur, roi, si dur et si bizarre

Que dans le Nord on admire, on compare,

A Salomon, ainsi que les Germains,

Leur empereur au César des Romains.

for the sole purpose of concealing the small mutilation, mentioned before, was fond of being charged with a vicious failing of so many Grecians and Romans, of which he never was guilty.

CH A P. VI.

*On Frederick's Domestic and Literary Life;
his learned Connexions, and his Companions;
till his Decease.*

SMOOTH and calm was Frederick's domestic life. Whenever he could dispense with acting the *king*, he was fond of retiring to the *man*. Perhaps no sovereign knew better how to value the advantages of domestic life, than the philosopher

philosopher of Sans-souci; and yet no king ever wore his crown with greater dignity and glory.

No monarch on earth has more dignified his solitude, or better employed his hours of retirement, than Frederick. The innumerable productions of his genius are immortal witnesses how sparing he was of his time, how he laid hold on every moment of leisure, and with what honour he could give an account of every hour of his life!

Of all the appendages of royalty, very little was seen in Sans-souci. Ministers, courtiers, and the great of the realm, never appeared there or at Potsdam, but when called by the king. Instead of the former bustle at Versailles, in Frederick's place of residence, and
round

round about it, reigned silence and peace.

Frederick, so extremely fond of solitude and quiet, especially in his latter years, would not suffer any stranger, whom he had not asked for, to approach his calm retreat. For this reason, in that part of his life, no one was permitted to come near the terrace of *Little Sans-fouci*. In better times, Frederick would often take a solitary walk on this terrace, and did not like, even then, to be seen by strangers. Before the bridge, near the water-piece and terrace of *Little Sans-fouci*, he placed on a pedestal of porphyre, six feet high, the bust of the duke of Alba, a most shocking face, "that," as once he jesting said to the marquis Luchefini, "strangers who have a mind to intrude
" into my circle, by the face of the
duke

“duke of Alba, may be frightened
“away.”

Though Frederick, in an eminent degree, possessed the art of living with himself, yet, at the same time, he felt very forcibly the want of conversation with interesting men. He has immortalized his friendly intercourse with Jordan, Maupertuis, d'Argens, and Algarotti, by innumerable monuments. The greatness, and sometimes the meanness of these gentlemen, their conduct and actions, has so much been talked of, that I am resolved, in this work, to say no more of them, than is required, for the purpose of placing the king's behaviour towards them, in its proper light.

Frederick's true friendship for some men of great worth, for instance, for Lord Marshal, and a great many of his generals and field-

field-officers, is universally known. The Germans, who lived with the king, were (Polniz and Gotter excepted) for the greatest part, military men. Among his ministers and courtiers, he chose but very few companions. In the number of generals and field officers, chosen for his company, at home and in the field, were, however, always some strangers ; as field-marshal Keith, a Scotchman ; General Lentulus, afterwards *Land-vougt*, at Koeniz, near Bern ; General Warnery, who discharged the first pistol in the seven years war, as with three more Prussian officers, he surprised the Saxon fortress Stolpen, and the amiable General de Rofieres, all three natives of Switzerland.

Concerning several literary friends of this great prince, I am able to relate
some

some circumstances which either do not agree with other reports, or are not to be found in books at all.

The compiler of a very voluminous, but unfaithful collection of anecdotes, tells us, that Frederick's well-known companion, the *Abbé* Bastiani, was introduced to him by Cardinal Zinzendorf; that the king sent him to Rome, and that the manner in which he executed his commission, ingratiated him with Frederick.*

Not a single word of all this is true.—Bastiani came from Italy into the Prussian dominions, about the end of Frederick William's reign. He lived in Italy as a young clergyman, and had received the

* Anecdotes and character traits, taken from the Life of Frederick II. (Berlin, 1786—1789) Vol. VII. page 28.

the tonsure. But, in the same way, as on the coast of Africa relations sell each other to European kidnappers, young Bastiani, by one of his friends, was sold to a Prussian recruiting party. This was, at that time, a very common mercantile speculation. Bastiani was lifted in a regiment of cavalry. Very luckily for him, the commander of the regiment soon perceived his extensive knowledge and his talents; he made him his secretary. Ere long, Bastiani gained the favour of every one with whom he conversed. In a short time he was dismissed from the regiment, and got some small prebend in a place, the name of which I do not know. The *Abbé de Prades* introduced him to the king's notice, and he was directly called to Potsdam. He was a profound scholar,

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lar, talked with great sense, and possessed himself very soon of the king's particular affection. Bastiani deserved, as well as in later times, his countryman Luchefini, this fortunate distinction, by his many great merits, and also by his never speaking ill of any one to the king, to whom he never reported even the most indifferent thing, which in any way, could hurt another's peace and happiness. Every secret he was entrusted with was sacred to him.

The king never used him ill, as Mr. Bushing tells us*, but treated him always, and especially in the latter part of his life, with kindness and friendship. At that time Bastiani was almost every winter invited to Potsdam. In the year
1784.

* Character of Frederick II, page 77.

1784, he was, the whole months of February and March, one of the constant companions of the king. Frederick was then indisposed with the gout, but, nevertheless, in his daily and frequent conversations with Bastiani, Baron Horst, Count Chazot, and Marquis Luchefini, as witty, ingenious and amiable, as in his happiest days. Bastiani was then almost deaf, and could hardly hear at all, but through a horn, applied to his ear. The king, though his voice was commonly mild, spoke very loud in Bastiani's company, to show him his attention and regard.

On such as are fast-days for Roman Catholics, the king always ordered four or five fasting dishes for Bastiani; not in order to save his soul, (for the king

F 2

and

and Bastiani were of one and the same religion) but from a kind of facetious civility. He sometimes would say :
 “ In a well organized state every one
 “ must do his duty ; to fast and pray
 “ is the duty of an abbot.”

So very kindly did Frederick treat the good Bastiani, that once at table, in the presence of Baron Horst and Marquis Luchefini, he even mixed for him a purging potion. Bastiani had eaten the day before, very likely from love for his country, too much of the famous *polenta*, which offended his stomach. The king seeing, the next day, that he did not eat, enquired the reason. Luchefini, a very temperate man, related, smiling, the history of the foul stomach. “ An indigestion,” said the king, “ is not to be neglected or
 “ trifled

“ trifled with, especially when we are
 “ old.” Directly he ordered his *chamber
 buſſar* to fetch ſome rhubarb, diluted
 it with his own hand, and gave it to
 Baſtiani, who, I dare ſay, is the only
 man in Europe, for whom a monarch,
 with his own hand, ever mixed a purg-
 ing draught.

The king was very fond of joking
 with Baſtiani, and took in good part
 his jeſts, though ſometimes they bor-
 dered on ſarcaſm. Before Baron Horſt,
 Frederick once ſaid to him: “ When
 “ you are in Heaven, my dear abbot,
 “ and I come, and Peter ſhould turn
 “ me off, as an heretick, would you
 “ then not be ſo kind as to ſmuggle
 “ me in under your mantle.” “ With
 “ all my heart,” replied Baſtiani, “ if
 “ there they ſhould not look as ſharp.

“ after contraband goods, - as in this
“ country.”

Bastiani requited Frederick's favours with the most sincere attachment to his kind sovereign, and died soon (very likely broken-hearted) after the account reached him, that his great benefactor was gone.

Frederick's literary companions were not all so successful as Bastiani, and, sometimes, very ill chosen. One of these was the *Chevalier de Masson*, a captain in the regiment Richelieu. Count Gotter became acquainted with him in his journey to Montpellier, and after his return, told the king, that he had got an excellent catch for him, one *Chevalier de Masson*, a *bel-esprit*, and a scholar; for in the passage-boat, where he had met with him, he had read Horace,
and

and seasoned his conversation with many a Greek phrase. This *genius* was directly ordered to Potsdam, appointed chamberlain with a good salary, and became one of the king's select party at his suppers. He supped four or five times with him, but no more; for Frederick found very soon, that the *bel-esprit* had neither sense nor judgment.

For a very stupid remark, he was banished for ever from the king's table and company. They were speaking of great tactical men, and the monarch said, that he preferred Hannibal to all the others. "And I," (interrupting him) said the Chevalier, "despise him, "because he was not an honest man." "How do you know that?" asked the king. "Hannibal was no Christian,"

F 4

quoth

quoth the Chevalier, "and I am of
 " opinion, that none but a good Chris-
 " tian can be an honest man." At this
 blunder a loud laughter broke out at
 Frederick's table, and Poelniz whispered
 to Count Gotter: "This gentleman is
 " one of those geniusses and profound
 " scholars, a traveller sometimes meets
 " with in passage-boats." Though
 Masson never more was called to the
 king's presence, he lived afterwards
 fifteen years in Potsdam, did not lose
 his pay, locked himself up in his apart-
 ment, and was never seen abroad. Even
 his servant was not permitted to enter
 his room, but reached his meals, and
 what he wanted besides, through a hole
 in the door. I am told that Masson is
 still living somewhere in France, and, if
 so, I dare say, he remembers Hannibal.

Colonel

Colonel Guichard, or Quintus Jcilius, as the king called him, maintained, with more honour, his place among Frederick's companions. He had been a clergyman, and preached many a time. In the seven years war, he commanded a free battalion, and was afterwards entrusted with some financial affairs, though he understood tactics much better than finance. But he had good sense enough to employ under him, men of great knowledge in financial matters; such as Count Bolza, whom Frederick the Great has reason to call a partner of the emperor Francis the First*, because if Bolza's, and his friend Calzabigi's plan of farming the excise in the Prussian dominions, had succeeded, it is

F 5; certain,

* Oeuvres posthumes de Frederick le Grand, Vol. III. pag. 26.

certain, that the emperor would have been one of the farmers general to the King of Prussia. Whenever Guichard acted without such an assistant, his financial transactions breathed very much the spirit of a commander of a free party. The king, knowing all the manœuvres of Quintus Icilius, could not help lampooning him sometimes, but Quintus's answers were often very keen.

He wanted to marry a Miss Slabern-dorf, a young and beautiful lady, though he was old and unfit for such an enterprise. As he solicited the king's consent for this marriage, Frederick endeavoured to divert him from it: but seeing that all his reasoning was in vain, he grew impatient, and told Quintus, " that he
 " was rather of too mean an extraction
 " for

“ for an alliance with a Miss Slabern-
 “ dorf; for his father and grandfather
 “ had been nothing but potters.”

“ Your majesty,” replied Quintus, “ is
 “ as much a potter as my father and
 “ grandfather; the only difference is,
 “ that they had a manufactory of delft,
 “ and you have one of china.” Quintus
 afterwards married Miss Slaberndorf,
 and remained one of Frederick’s com-
 panions till his death.

Some of his *leſſeurs*, eſpecially Mr.
 Cat and Pauw, were likewise of this
 number.

Mr. Cat, a Swiſs from Morſee, near
 the lake of Geneva, ſaw the king, for the
 firſt time, in Holland, in a *treck-ſhuyt*, or
 paſſage-boat. He pleaſed the king, whom
 the place, a dark periwig and a cinna-
 mon-coloured coat made quite unſuf-

pected by him*. Three months after, Frederick wrote to Mr. Cat, and desired him to enter into the service of the man with the dark periwig. Mr. Cat had just before been ill, and could not accept of this offer. After the battle of Leuthen, in the year 1757, the king wrote again, and Mr. Cat arrived at Breslaw, in the year 1758. The monarch said to him : “ I engage you for my company.”* He was of course properly not the king’s reader ; on the contrary, the king was often *his*. Frederick was very fond of reading loud, and read exceedingly well. Cat was one and twenty years with him. He followed him through manifold dangers

* Vie de Frederick II. Roi de Prusse. Strasbourg. 1789. Tom. vi. page 571 and 572.

* “ Je vous prends pour ma compagnie.”

gers in the seven years war, and had, of course, many an opportunity of seeing *in undress*, the greatest man of our age, in the most trying situations, in the highest glory, and the deepest distress. Frederick entrusted him with a great number of his literary manuscripts, and often charged him with the delicate commission of correcting them. No situation in the world requires more self-command, secrecy and freedom from passion, than the daily converse with a king. Nothing, in such a situation, pleases longer a crowned head, than pure reason, real virtue, the greatest reserve, and a strict fidelity. Cat possessed all these qualities, and, however, after having lived one and twenty years with Frederick the Great, fell into disgrace, for reasons, which are not known. Frederick left him

him his pay, and M. Cat lives happy and respected, the winter at Potsdam, and the summer at his country seat. King Frederick William the Second has lately presented him with the survivorship of a rich prebend, and allowed him to wear the mark of distinction of the prebendaries.

When M. Cat was obliged to leave the king, the famous M. Pauw, prebendary of Xanten, became his *lecteur*. Frederick had long before known this deeply learned and ingenious man from his writings, and had even, what is very strange, written against him a pamphlet, the title of which is: “ De l’Amerique & des Americains, ou Observations curieuses du
 “ Philosophe *la Douceur*, qui a parcouru
 “ cet Hémisphère pendant la dernière
 “ Guerre, en faisant le noble métier de
 “ tuer

“ tuer les hommes, sans les manger.”
 “ On America and the Americans, or
 “ curious Remarks of the Philosopher
 “ *la Douceur* (meekness), who, during
 “ the last War, has over-run our Hemis-
 “ phere, carrying on the noble trade of
 “ cutting people’s throats, without eat-
 “ ing them.”

This pamphlet contained a gentle and facetious vindication of M. Pernetty, the king’s librarian at Berlin, against M. Pauw. This Pernetty, a man of very moderate abilities, was originally a Benedictine monk, and having been with M. Bougainville, when this navigator discovered the Faulkland Islands, had published a description of them. In this description, he relates many things concerning America and its discovery, with all the credulity of a monk. Pauw wrote his excellent

cellent treatise : “ Considerations on the
“ Americans,” wherein he handled M.
Pernetty rather a little roughly. Per-
netty, for the purpose of vindicating him-
self, wrote a large volume against Pauw ;
but he answered him in an irrefutable
manner. The king, not liking that his
first librarian, whom he had called to Ber-
lin as a great scholar, should be publicly
exposed to scorn and laughter, endeavour-
ed to give him a lift by the pamphlet be-
fore-mentioned, and thus ended the con-
troversy between Pauw and Pernetty.
Pauw lived but a very short time with
Frederick ; he could not bear the drudg-
ery of going to the king every day at a
certain hour, for the purpose of reading
before him. He told the king, that to
endure any kind of restraint was quite
out of his reach, parted with Frederick
on

on friendly terms, and returned to Xanten.

The bishop of Ermeland was too one of Frederick's companions in his latter years. He is a Polish nobleman, of the family of Grabowsky. In the earlier part of his life, he had lived a good while in France. His conversation was highly agreeable, and he always shewed a great knowledge of the world, during his stay with the king. Count Mirabeau tells us,* that Frederick had lowered his income from an hundred thousand to four and twenty thousand dollars: this is the tittle tattle of Berlin. The king has not lessened, but increased his income, and made his situation not worse, but better. A bishop had never more than five and twenty

* Histoire secrete de la cour de Berlin. Vol. II.
pag. 368.

twenty thousand dollars *per annum*. When Frederick took possession of West Prussia, he allowed the bishop annually six and twenty thousand dollars, kept all his castles in repair, allowed him free fuel and game, and ordered the Prussian exchequer to pay all his debts. One of the first and last companions of this great king was Count Chazot, who, with the title of Lieutenant General in the French service, and a pension of twelve thousand livres, lives now at Lubeck as governor of that place. Chazot was captain in a French regiment of dragoons, when Frederick first became acquainted with him, during the campaign near the Rhine, which, when prince royal, he made with his father Frederick William the First. The prince was so much pleased with the count, that, as soon as the war was over, he

he prevailed on him to leave the French service. Chazot came to him at Rheinf-berg, and was one of Frederick's most intimate companions. Immediately after his accession to the throne, he gave him a company of dragoons in the famous regiment Bareith. Chazot everywhere performed wonders of gallantry. In the battle of Friedberg, he laid sixty-six standards and colours, taken by that regiment, at Frederick's feet. He complimented Chazot's mother, who lived in Normandy, with gold and diamonds; and assured her, in a fine letter, of his esteem for her son. But his behaviour towards Chazot was regulated by the same principles which directed his conduct with all his companions whom he did not like to lose. He treated him by turns with the kindest condescension and with much coolness. Chazot

zot was obliged to stay a good while in his quarters at Pafawalk; and sometimes in his letters the king would tell him many disagreeable things. The good Chazot did not know this manner of Frederick, which I shall speak of in a peculiar chapter, and could not endure it. He seized, therefore, the first opportunity of getting a place more profitable than a regiment, which was all he could expect, and left the Prussian service. The king bore him no spleen for doing so; on the contrary, he invited him often, and the last time, in the year 1784, made him handsome presents, treated him in the kindest manner, and took his sons into his service. Chazot's conduct was always regulated by the clearest understanding and the noblest ambition; his military talents are great, and his knowledge is as profound

profound as extensive. He would speak truth to the king, with the same openness and sincerity as to the lowest of his courtiers.

The Marquis Luchefini for six years enjoyed Frederick's company till his death. He was his daily table-companion, and the constant associate of his evening hours. No other philosopher ever darted such keen and candid looks into Frederick's head and heart, as this ingenious and amiable Italian. The king not only employed him in the department of foreign affairs, and in his correspondence with the Pope; he not only entrusted him with secret negotiations; he did more: for a great, universally beloved, and justly celebrated prince, has assured me, that Frederick had informed Luchefini of all the foreign and internal political concerns of the Prussian monarchy,

narchy, and initiated him in all his miseries.

If notwithstanding this assertion, Frederick kept back some secrets, which perhaps he did not think proper to reveal to any mortal, however, Luchefini was the unbounded confident of his *literary* life. To all his most favourite ideas and sentiments, he gave free course in his conversation with Luchefini. All his new and old literary productions, all his manuscripts he gave him to peruse, and conversed with him about them all. One proof of his confidence in Luchefini, I saw with my own eyes, in the marquis's house at Potsdam ; all the king's letters to d'Alembert in his own hand-writing, which I know very well, were in Luchefini's possession ; the copies only of these letters were sent to d'Alembert.

No

No one, of course, could have been more fit than Luchefini to publish the king's posthumous works; if it had been required, to accompany them with notes and explanations from Frederick's own mouth. His remarks would have stamped a higher value on many a less entertaining tract, and many a less interesting poem; for they would have acquainted us with the occurrences that occasioned them, and the moment which gave them birth. But these notes and explanations will be written, when all those who alone are able to write them are no more.

Count Herzberg entirely lived for Frederick, and with him; for since 1745, he was his minister, companion, and friend: but, notwithstanding, he was also the man to whom Frederick said, ten days before his death, "*Croyez vous, que j'ai besoin*
de

“ de vos yeux pour voir ?” “ Do you
 “ think I want your eyes to see ?” The
 minister had given him to understand, in
 a note, that he had not answered to some
 very important point in the ministerial
 dispatches. This caused the dreadful
 question about the eyes. But the very
 next day Frederick sent for Herzberg,
 and told him : “ Vous avez eu raison ;
 “ vous n’avez qu’à écrire ce que vous
 “ avez proposé & à envoyer même un
 “ courier à cet effet.” “ You were
 “ right ; you may write what you have
 “ proposed, and even send a messenger
 “ for that purpose :” which was done.

Forty years lived Herzberg with Frederick the Great, and, since the peace of Hubertsburg, in a kind of intimacy and friendship. He never received from him any other present, but a Porcelain set of plates

plates and dishes, a fortnight before his death. But two days after the conclusion of the peace of Hubertsburg, he came to Herzberg, and said to him: "You have made the peace, as I the war; one against many." Frederick knew very well that this was enough for an Herzberg. I shall say no more about him; for Herzberg's name does not only belong to Frederick's history, but to the present grand history of Europe.

I'll conclude this chapter with some general remarks on Frederick's domestic and literary friends and companions.

Count Mirabeau says in his letter against the excellent Count Guibert: "Frederick did not love Voltaire more than any other of his literary companions: on the contrary, he loved him
VOL. I. G less;

“ less; and it would not be difficult for
 “ the writer of his private life, to prove,
 “ that Frederick, all his life time, did
 “ never care much for men of genius.
 “ On the whole, he wanted more hear-
 “ ers, than talkers.”*

How much or little Voltaire was be-
 loved by Frederick, is a problem, which
 may easily be resolved. At first he knew
 him only from his works and letters; of
 course, he knew then only Voltaire the
 writer, not Voltaire the man. But he
 had scarce seen the real, actual, bodily
 Voltaire, when he found that the *Henri-*
ade and its author, were two beings,
 totally different. His relish for the
Henriade

* Lettre du Comte de Mirabeau sur l'éloge de
 Frederick, par Mr. de Guibert, et l'Essai général de
 Tactique du même auteur. Page 8 & 9.

Henriade remained; his affection for Voltaire passed away. Frederick never ceased to praise Voltaire's writings, but to their author he told many a bitter truth. After the scenes with *Maupertuis*, he never admitted him into his company, yet offered him an asylum in his dominions, when he thought he wanted it. However, should Frederick have never felt any affection for Voltaire, he did certainly love Algarotti, d'Argens, Baffiani, Luchefini, and many others; and Count Mirabeau's assertion, that Frederick wanted more hearers than talkers, is nothing but a squib of witticism, so common with this author.

Amidst those scenes, which passed between Voltaire and Maupertuis, Frederick shewed the greatest mildness and forbearance, though even Mr. Denina

G 2 mistakes

mistakes it so much, as to charge him with intolerance, for having ordered the *Akakia*, to be burnt by the common hangman. The *Akakia*, however, was no article of faith, but the most malicious libel on Maupertuis; and its doom must appear, to every well-informed person, not an act of intolerance, but quite the reverse.

Voltaire had already spread over all Potsdam the contents of his *Akakia*, when, at the king's desire, he read it to him. "You may be right, for aught
 " I know," said he to Voltaire, when he had done reading, "and the style is
 " lively enough; but consider, pray,
 " how it would hurt my own honour,
 " to allow that the president of the
 " Royal Society at Berlin, should be
 " thus

" thus publicly hooted. For this rea-
 " son, I demand your word of honour,
 " that the Akakia shall never be print-
 " ed." Voltaire was very ready to
 give him his word of honour, and
 yet, four days after, many thousand
 printed copies of the Akakia made their
 appearance in Potsdam. The king sent
 directly for Voltaire, and reproached
 him, in the severest manner, for this trea-
 cherous behaviour. Voltaire denied the
 charge, and his impudence went even so
 far, as to assure Frederick, that he was
 not the author of the printed Akakia.
 " Well," replied the king, " as you
 " are not the author of this work, it
 " shall be burnt by the common hang-
 " man." This was done, and drove the
 great Voltaire almost mad.

Is this intolerance? Voltaire behaved with the most contemptible meanness, and the king very kindly. But he never could forget this meanness; and as Voltaire, after Maupertuis's death, continued to lampoon him, Frederick, in a letter to Voltaire, compared him with ravens, that feed on dead carcases.

A gentleman has favoured me with an observation on Frederick's openness and frankness at table, and in his evening parties, which I shall not withhold from my readers, as that gentleman had many an opportunity of being a witness to it. At dinner, though always very entertaining, the king would say nothing but what he wished to be publicly known. This was food for the foreign ministers at Berlin, who had constantly pensioners among the king's servants,

servants, and Frederick delighted in foiling the gentlemen of the diplomatic corps. Much more open and less cautious was he in his evening entertainments; for then his servants did never, or, at least, very seldom appear.

One evening, however, one of these servants was present, when Frederick, in French, and quite loud, told the Marquis Luchefini, the only gentleman with him, something of the greatest importance. The Marquis, in Italian, and a low voice, answered the monarch, that the servant present in the room, understood French. “Ces animaux n’entendent pas le François,” “These brutes don’t understand French,” replied the king, very loud. Luchefini named to me the servant, who still lived with the king. I was curious to know

whether he understood French. The very next time of my coming to Sans-fouci, I took, therefore, an opportunity of speaking to him. I addressed him in French, *et cet animal me répondit admirablement !** Thus, perhaps, in an unguarded moment, a secret escaped this great prince, who else was altogether impenetrable, and would often say, "Did my shirt know what I do, I would burn it directly."

* This brute answered me in French admirably well.

CHAP. VII.

*On Frederick's supposed Contempt of the
German Literature.*

FREDERICK, a German prince,
could not write German*, never
read a German book, conversed with
his friends and companions, not in the
German, but the French language,
established at Berlin a literary society,
not a German, but a French one, and,
G 5 how-

* Mr. Formey in his *Souvenirs d'un Citoyen*, vol. 1.
page 131, 353 and 354, has proved that Frederick
spelt French not much better, and this is not to be
wondered at, when we recollect, that even Voltaire
spelt French but very badly, and that, for this reason,
his secretary was obliged to review and correct what-
ever he wrote.

however, did neither slight the Germans, nor condemn their literature.

When a child and boy, he was educated and instructed in the very same way, as other princely children in Germany at that time were, and, perhaps, are even now, sixty years later. However German his father was, in all other respects*,

Frederick

* Frederick William knew so very little of the French language, that he did not even know the meaning of the French word Régent. “Un jour,” says Mr. Formey, “le roi rencontra en rue un des régens du college François, homme agreste et qui avoit la physionomie la plus pédantesque, qu’on a jamais vue. ‘*Qui êtes vous ?*’ ‘*Je suis régent,*’ — du ton le plus ferme. Cela derouta le roi, qui n’avoit jamais oui parler, que du Régent de France. Il se tourna vers les officiers, qui le suivoient, et portant son doigt au front, il leur fit signe, que cet homme étoit fou.” “The king, one day, met in the street, one of the regents of the French college, a clumsy fellow, with the most pedantic face ever seen. ‘*Who are you ?*’ ‘*I am regent,*’ — in

Frederick got a French *gouvernante*, and a French instructor. What he learnt, when a boy, he pursued when a youth. At that time German books were never read at German courts, even by servants. Every German prince and nobleman, formed his taste on French authors, and, if he could write at all, wrote French. The literary friends of Frederick's youth, were all Frenchmen; in Rheinsberg, as at all other any way civilized German courts, they spoke French. Frederick, being thus situated, could, by no means, get acquainted

G 6. with

“ in the most determined tone. This puzzled the
 “ king, who had never heard of any other regent
 “ than that of France. He turned to the officers
 “ who followed him, and, putting his finger to his
 “ forehead, made them a sign that the man was mad.”
 Souvenirs d'un Citoyen, vol. 1. page 87 and 88.

with the German literature and orthography.

Nothing but the steadiness and firmness of Frederick's character and sentiments, could induce him, to pursue in his manhood and old age, the very same course in his studies, which he had taken when a youth. He wrote his works in the most universally understood and best liked language of Europe; in that language, which was more his mother-tongue than the German. He wrote in the language of that nation, who at that time wrote better than any other nation; and, perhaps, he might also perceive, that it is much easier to write well in French than in German.

However, Frederick did not scorn the German muse. She might dance her festive rounds, chant her hymns
and

and sing her glees. He only did not care to see or hear her. When Frederick was young, no German Voltaire was existing. Innumerable writers, at present Germany's pride and glory, were then unborn. For this reason, Frederick cherished French literature, which, even in the early years of Lewis XIV, was as highly cultivated as now, a century later, the German is, and read no German books.

His predilection for foreign, and, especially, French literature, was, however, chiefly increased and strengthened by his constant intercourse with Algarotti, Maupertuis, Voltaire, and d'Argens. The company of these gentlemen he liked best. Their tone of conversation excelled every thing, that he saw, heard, or knew of the German literati.

FIG. SELECT VIEWS OF THE LIFE, &c.

terati. Therefore, none of them were invited to his delicious suppers in the marble saloon of Little Sans-souci, commonly protracted so late, that the legs of all the king's servants were often swollen. Many a cheerful bottle of *bright* Champaign was quaffed at these nocturnal feasts of the muses. Perhaps there is no place in all Germany, where wit flowed ever so copiously, as in this marble saloon. "How often, perhaps, did they here defy and challenge Heaven," said I, struck with awe, sometimes to myself, when sitting among the Corinthian pillars, I saw before me, Venus Urania, and Apollo holding open in his hands, Lucretius's famous work, exhibiting these words in golden letters:—

The sociam studeo scribendis versibus esse,
Quos ego *de rerum natura* pangere conor.

But, notwithstanding Frederick's predilection for foreign literature, he never slighted or despised the German nation. All his grand ideas were put in execution by Germans; all his bold and immortal exploits performed with them. Nor did he scorn the German language: all letters concerning internal or foreign public affairs, all the reports of his ministers and generals he ordered to be written in German, and in the field he spoke German with all his officers, even with those who were natives of France. The Royal Society of Berlin, alone, were obliged to write French, and at his table, and in his evening entertainment, he spoke nothing but French.

A greater genius than Lambert never appeared at Berlin, Leibniz and Frederick excepted. Great courage and a noble

noble frankness, distinguished his behaviour to the king. Though he had something very peculiar about him, in his carriage and address, all attempts and endeavours to ridicule him, proved ineffectual to Frederick. He always spoke of Lambert with the greatest respect, and would often say to his fault-finders: "With a man of such wonderful abilities and such an immense knowledge, we must never mind trifles."

Frederick was very much pleased with the Swiss nation, and gave many a proof of it. Eight natives of Switzerland were, at the same time, members of the Royal Society at Berlin: *viz.* Beguelin, Merian, Bernoulli, Cat, Lambert, Euler, Sulzer, and Weguelin. The instructors, whom Frederick gave his nephew, were
Swiss.

Swiss. However, some of these respectable men were obliged to pay that drawback, which the literary mob never fail to exact.

Sulzer paid more of it than any one else, and, nevertheless, he exerted his utmost endeavours, to raise in Frederick some attention for German literature. Sir Andrew Mitchel, and the marquis d'Argens assisted Sulzer, and by their joint efforts, it was effected, that the king took some notice of the famous Saxon Literati, Reiske, Gellert, Ernesti, and Rabener, and conversed with them. Sulzer's love and veneration for German excellence, inspired him with the noble thought of immortalizing Colonel Heyden's glorious defence of Colberg with a golden medal. Frederick highly praised the patriotic design, testified his applause, desired

desired to be one of the subscribers, and wished that the same honour might be paid to General Werner. This was done, and, during the war, Frederick wrote to Sulzer, a letter full of sensibility and gratitude, which I cannot withhold from my readers*. His love and veneration

* “ Je suis d’autant plus sensible à votre attention, d’avoir travaillé à honorer ceux, qui servent si bien leur patrie, que vous m’avez prevenu sur ce dessein, que j’aurois executé depuis long-temps, sans les circonstances presentes, qui ne me permettent pas toujours, de donner, comme je le voudrois, ceux, qui se distinguent, les marques de consideration, qu’ils meritent.” “ I feel the more gratitude for your endeavours, to honour those that serve so well their country, as you have anticipated me in this design, which I should have executed long ago, but for my present situation, which does not always follow me to grant to those who distinguish themselves, such marks of honour as they deserve, and I should be happy to give them.

venation for Sulzer became afterwards so great, that he did every thing in his power to sweeten his residence at Berlin, though the great and good man constantly longed for a calm retreat, on the delightful banks of the lake of Zurich.

Frederick's fondness for the Swiss nation might be susceptible of a comic light, were it proper to place any thing belonging to so great a man, in such a point of view. Colonel Stamford, now governor to the hereditary prince of Orange, told me at Potsdam, that with Frederick every man was a Swiss, if he had peremptorily settled it with himself, that he was one. Thus, for instructor of the present prince of Prussia, he chose a Mr. Benish, for the only reason of his being a Swiss, though this gentleman
had

had never seen Switzerland, and was a native of Breslaw.

With much generosity and kindness did Frederick behave towards the Lord Paramount of all German literati of those times, Baron Haller. In the year 1749, he bid Maupertuis write to tell him :
 “ He might come to Berlin and reside
 “ there. Titles and rank he should
 “ have as much of as he liked, and a
 “ large salary too. For all this, the king
 “ would never ask any kind of business ;
 “ nothing should he desire but his presence at Berlin.” Haller, however, would have certainly been a great acquisition for the Royal Society at Berlin; and this, in all likelihood, was Maupertuis’s wish and intention:

When Haller received this letter from Maupertuis, I lived with him in his house

house at Gottingen, and recollect extremely well, what an impression it made upon him, especially that part of it, wherein Maupertuis gave him to understand, that the king would very often send for Haller, and invite him to his suppers with Voltaire, and his other evening companions. All these offers and views lifted his soul, as I scarce ever saw elevated a soul of the better kind. Haller threw aside, for a time, all his folios, anatomy, and botany. He studied the *Belles Lettres*, all the day long, and overflowed with wit. Sometimes, however, the unchristian evening hours and infidel banquets at Sans-soucy and Potsdam, would bear hard upon his heart. He told me what they then said at Berlin about these entertainments, and Frederick's whole private

private life and Berlin's talk, at that time, was precisely and literally the same as afterwards Voltaire's, in the lying *Vie privée de Frederick*. Haller seemed to feel his superiority over Voltaire, in in all the scientific branches of polite literature, and the greater extent of his superior powers. In a more comprehensive compass, and much deeper had he dived in search of all the sources of human knowledge. He was better acquainted with the history of all ages, all nations and mankind. Concerning history, and the philosophy of history, it has always afforded me equal pleasure to hear Haller and to read Voltaire. His great and discerning mind knew equally well how to reject what was useless, and to place to advantage

stage what was exquisite and good. Haller had not in his conversation the smartness of Voltaire: but his perception was equally quick, and his way of delivering his ideas, equally good. Though not hyper-orthodox in so dreadful a manner as afterwards, Haller was even at that time a good Christian, and, therefore, said to me: "Figure to yourself a Christian, a man that believes in the religion of Jesus, and professes it from his heart, amidst Frederick, Voltaire, Maupertuis, and d'Argens." Haller, however, wrote to Maupertuis, and acquainted him with the conditions, under which he was resolved to go to Berlin. The king agreed to all these conditions, and the whole business seemed to be finally settled, when Haller, very unexpectedly, informed Maupertuis,

tuis, that it was impossible for him to go to Berlin, for it would be unbecoming him to break off his earlier connexions with Hanover.

Maupertuis enraged by Haller's conduct, was his enemy all his life after. The king was likewise much displeased. But Frederick forgave easily, whenever he could forgive. In the year 1756, he offered him, through Sulzer, the place of chancellor of the university at Hall, with a salary of three thousand dollars, which, however, Haller did not accept.

Haller, in the third book of his political novel, *Ufong*, relates this piece of history, in the following manner: —
 “ *Zongtu*, (viz. Frederick, King of Prussia) did not believe any difference betwixt good and evil. *Oel Fu* (viz. Haller)

“ Haller) not choosing to conceal from
 “ him, that he worshipped God, and
 “ preferred virtue to vice, lost his
 “ place, and *Zongtu* stooped even so
 “ low, as to write against him in harsh
 “ and severe expressions; *Oel Fu*, how-
 “ ever, never read his writings.

Mere fiction is all this. But, as I
 know Frederick's feelings and senti-
 ments much better than Haller did,
 my heart smarts at this passage un-
 deniably pointed against Frederick.—
 For this reason, I could not with-
 stand the impulse (which else might
 appear rather unfriendly towards my
 great instructor and most respected re-
 lation) to defend Frederick against the
 sovereign of all the German literati at
 that time, especially, as one monarch
 had first offended the other, and the

discharge of a pistol was all that the monarch at Berlin allowed himself against the *monarch* at Gottingen.

C H A P. VIII.

On Frederick's supposed Superstition, and his Alchymical Experiments.

A KEEN observer and favourite companion of Frederick the Great, told me in Potsdam, that he now and then had been rather a little superstitious. I did not wonder at it, but thought it a glaring calumny, when I read

read somewhere that Frederick had believed in the *white lady**.

This monarch, who knew very well, that, during the reign of his father, a scullion had been flogged, and a soldier been made to ride on the wooden ass, in the dress of the white lady, was so far from believing in this famous sprite, that he laughed heartily at all those who gave credit to her. Once, at table, he asked prince Sacken: "Is there at Dresden too such a prophetic-sprite?" "Yes," replied the prince. "Why," said the king, "also a white lady?" The prince puzzled by this question,

H 2 and

* A much talked of hobgoblin in the Royal palace at Berlin, whose appearance was supposed to be an ill omen to the Royal Family.

† Quoi, aussi une femme blanche†

and afraid that the monarch might be displeased if he told him the truth, in the true character of a supple courtier, instantly coloured the sprite, and answered the king: “ May it please your majesty, that lady is green*.” It is scarce possible to conceive the loud laugh which at this answer burst forth at the king’s table. He, however, never ceased to pursue, with his sarcasms, all the secretaries of the white lady.

A quondam companion of this prince, the ingenious Mr. Pauw, very lately assured a friend of mine, “ that Frederick the Great, notwithstanding his powerful mind, had not been able to resist the temptation of alchymical operations, and different means of discovering

* Non, Sire ! c’est une femme verte.

“ vering future events. These operations
 “ and experiments, through many years,
 “ had cost him ten thousand dollars *per*
 “ *annum*. For the purpose of finding
 “ out the length of his life, or the issue
 “ of some important business, scarcely
 “ any astrologer or prophet in all his do-
 “ minions was left unconsulted; though
 “ it cannot be asserted that he put con-
 “ fidence in them. A propensity to such
 “ things, however, seemed to be heredit-
 “ ary in the house of Brandenburg.”

This reflection on Frederick the Great,
 by so able an observer and deep thinker
 as Mr. Pauw, deserves the nicest dis-
 quisition. Men of great respectability
 at Berlin, to whom Mr. Pauw's opi-
 nion was communicated, replied, “ that
 “ they had never heard of such a thing,
 “ and that it could not have escaped their

H 3

“ notice

“ notice if it was true.” But the right of these gentlemen to give out for false every thing concerning Frederick which has escaped their notice, seems, at least, to be doubtful.

Frederick the Great said once himself to his friend and minister, Baron Horst :
 “ Whatever, in all ages, mankind have
 “ supposed to be true in astrology and
 “ the knowledge of futurity, is almost as
 “ ridiculous stuff as all the religious sys-
 “ tems of the whole world. Since the
 “ remotest times, these two kinds of non-
 “ sense have been connected. Supersti-
 “ tion would always believe what
 “ common sense rejected. But being
 “ convinced that truth may be found
 “ even in ways directly opposite to rea-
 “ son, and that the most specious argu-
 “ ments often lead to ideas utterly false,
 “ I have

" I have made all possible inquiry into
 " these two great objects of our folly and
 " our faith. Whoever pretended to be
 " an astrologer, even every itinerant and
 " country prophet, has been consulted by
 " me ; for, respecting such things, we
 " learn nothing from desks and pulpits.
 " The result was, that I no-where found
 " any thing but old women's tales and
 " nonsense. No one in my dominions
 " understood the cabalistic calcule bet-
 " ter than Francheville, and he assur-
 " ed me that he put no confidence in it.
 " A great deal of such ridiculous stuff,
 " mingled with much learning, is laid
 " up in Count Gabalis's letters ; for this
 " reason they have afforded me much
 " amusement."

These were Frederick's own words.
 From comparing them with M. Pauw's
 H4 account,

account, we may learn how cautious we ought to be in adopting for historical truth, even such relations as bear all the appearance of it. Not a belief in astrological science is hereditary in the house of Brandenbourg; but, perhaps, a propensity to search even those dregs of human learning for some useful truth. Frederick, no doubt, has tried the idle art of astrologers and fortune-tellers, but he never believed in it.

The same ought to be said of his supposed partiality for alchymical operations. They have been made at his expence, under his eye, and he has followed them with the most intense attention; not from any belief in alchymy, but because he wanted to look through all the arts of the adepts.

“Fondness

"Fondness for alchymy," said he,
 one day, to Baron Horst, "is a kind of
 "disease; sometimes it seems cured by
 "reason, but it will often return un-
 "expected, and become epidemic. Fre-
 "dericksdorf believed in the transmuta-
 "tion of metals, and embarked him-
 "self with some alchymists, who got
 "to Potsdam. The rumour of this en-
 "terprise, was very soon spread through
 "the whole garrison, and there was
 "scarce one ensign in Potsdam, who did
 "not hope that some alchymic process
 "would enable him to pay his debts.
 "Alchymical swindlers and sharpers, in
 "various shapes, were now flocking to
 "Potsdam, from every corner of Eu-
 "rope. From Saxony came a Madame
 "de Pfuel, with two very beautiful
 "daughters. These ladies carried on
 "the

H 5

" the

" the trade in a methodical way, and
 " had the reputation of being eminent
 " *wizards*, especially with young folks.
 " I tried to crush the evil, but that
 " would not do. They offered to make
 " all possible experiments in my pre-
 " fence, and to convince me by ocular
 " proof. I thought this to be the best
 " means of unmasking that dangerous
 " delusion. I set the alchymists to
 " work, and had them narrowly watched.
 " To throw gold into the crucible, or
 " some such other gross imposition,
 " could not possibly be attempted.—
 " However, Madame de Pfuel acted
 " with so much cunning, that I could
 " not help allowing all her experiments
 " to be made, the whole course of
 " which has cost me much more than
 " the ten thousand dollars I had des-
 " tined

“tined for that purpose. It is, and
“will always be, silly to believe in the
“transmutation of metals. But this is
“true, that metals may be reduced to
“forms, under which nobody would
“suspect them. Whoever gives me
“back my money, shall learn this art
“from me. I must confess, however,
“that it makes no one richer; for, by
“transforming fifty ducats in such a
“manner, you lose about six of them.”

This declaration of Frederick, proves that he spent a great deal of money in alchymical experiments, but not that he believed in alchymy.

C H A P IX.

On Frederick's Political Character.

THE greatness of Frederick's mind was not formed through the gradual unfolding of an eminent genius; it was, at once, what it should be, and acted in full maturity and force.

Principles, which he once had made his own, he followed through the whole of his life, with unconquerable firmness. His very first political look hit the mark, and decided the point. The whole plan of his conduct in state affairs, the opinion and principles on political concerns, which he had once adopted,

adopted, he constantly followed, even in his old age.

When prince royal, he wrote a tract on the political situation of Europe in those times, which we find in the sixth volume of his posthumous works. He perceived, even then, what a combination of the greatest powers of Europe could achieve. He saw that such a league would be strong enough to divide among them all the world besides. He saw that a coalition of all the other powers was the only means to counteract such a league. Thus thought and wrote Frederick when prince royal, and, according to this opinion, he acted all his life as king.

After the death of the emperor, Charles the Sixth, conformably to this opinion, he found himself obliged to
enlarge

enlarge his dominions, that he too, one day, might have a voice among the great powers of Europe. France supposed then that the time was come, when she should be able to divide the formidable Austrian monarchy among three competitors, Bavaria, Saxony, and Mary Theresa, the heiress of Charles. It was the intention of the French court, that the electors of Saxony and Bavaria, should take so much as to leave to the rightful heiress, nothing but Hungary and Lower Austria. Frederick could claim only Silesia, and it was essential to get possession of this province, before another claimant should come and say : " Silesia is mine !" Frederick, of course, joined the party of France, that he might have his share of the Austrian heritage.

But,

But, he did not tie himself by any formal treaty of alliance. In the same manner, as with Bavaria and Saxony, he agreed only with France, to promote with all his might, their common interest. When, at the head of his troops, he marched out from Berlin, he said, jestingly, to the French ambassador: "I take up your game; if I get the trumps, we'll go halves." But finding, afterwards, that France and Saxony deceived him; that the French fought for nothing but his destruction, and the Saxon auxiliaries were rather obnoxious to him, nothing could bind Frederick any longer. He, therefore, made the peace of Breslaw, by which he got the full and perpetual possession of Silesia, solemnly transferred to him by its proprietor. George the Second, then the
only

only ally of Austria, guaranteed this peace.

A new scene, however, soon drew him over again to the side of the emperor, Charles the Seventh, before he had well time to establish himself in Silesia. England concluded the treaty of Worms, and Frederick came to know its secret articles in a way, which is not publicly understood. William the Eighth, Landgrave of Hesse-Cassel, from political motives and personal affection, was a very zealous partisan of the house of Bavaria. King George II. much respected this prince, and being his father-in-law, thought himself sure of him. The prince paid a visit to the king at Herrenhausen, near Hanover, and was dexterous enough to pump out of him all the most secret articles of the treaty of Worms.

Worms. He had no sooner possessed himself of this secret, than, with all speed, he disclosed it to Frederick, and this important discovery hastened his irruption into Bohemia.

The humbling of Frederick and France was the only aim of the treaty of Worms. Had Austria gained a full preponderance, Frederick would surely have been crushed by her overwhelming power. Therefore, he did not delay a moment. He flew to arms, apparently for the head of the empire, but, in effect, for his own preservation. The Austrian army possessed Alsace; and France was in great distress. Frederick saved France, but was afterwards very ill used by her; for, notwithstanding the most sacred promises, she suffered the whole of the Austrian forces

forces to draw towards Bohemia, without following them. Cardinal Fleury acted in so priestly and childish a manner, that he exposed the whole cause to the most perilous chance, by supposing that the taking of Friburg in Brisgau, was all France ought to attempt, at so critical a period. Fleury, however, did, in fact, nothing but follow the principles of Cardinal Mazarin. Both these cardinals were of the same opinion, as the famous Count Vergennes since, that true politicks consist in artifice and cunning.

Frederick was, therefore, obliged to bear the whole weight of the Austrian invasion in Bohemia. His plans were laid on the supposition, that the French army should follow Prince Charles to Bohemia. They did not. The consequences

quences are known. Even in the following year, after the glorious victories near Friedberg and Soor, Frederick was in danger of seeing the Austrian army invade his dominions, and, perhaps, take even Berlin. He, however, withstood this storm, with energy and speed; routing himself a party of the enemy near Great Henersdorf, meanwhile the rest were defeated near Kesselsdorf. Now he was able to conclude a peace, by which he lost nothing.

I have heard deep politicians say, that in Frederick's political character, during the two first Silesian wars, there had been a kind of timidity, and that he had taken from Austria, only as much as was necessary, for making her his irreconcilable enemy, but not so much as he wanted,

to

to maintain himself in the possession of what he had got.

That by the peace of Breslaw, he could not pretend to get more than he did, seems to be pretty clear. But with regard to the peace of Dresden, it may be asked, if he should not have insisted upon the cession of all Bohemia; or, at least, the greatest part of it, for the purpose of getting such a peace as he wanted.

Neither his friends nor his enemies, however, would have suffered him by the peace of Dresden, to disable and prevent Austria from ever thinking on the re-conquering of Silesia. The king's preponderance at the peace of Dresden was certainly not so great, that, with any hope of success, he could venture upon such an attempt. The Russian troops were ready to march against him.

Had

Had they invaded Prussia, they would have found an open, defenceless country. In both the battles of Great Henersdorf and Kesselsdorf, the Austrian army had suffered but very little; the great loss was sustained by the Saxons. The Austrians, in consequence, could stand and oblige him never to lose sight of them, meanwhile the Russians, Cossacks, and Calmucks would have been at liberty to do in his dominions, whatever they liked. After the treacherous treatment, he had experienced from France, he could no more depend on her: while his enemies might have cut him to pieces, she would have quietly pursued her conquests in the Netherlands. Frederick, therefore, made the peace of Dresden on the best terms he could; and had he, like Charles XII, staked and hazarded his

his all, he would have acted as a knight errant, not as a wise and politic prince.

Frederick was never timorous through the whole of his life. His natural constitution, in so fine organized a frame, could not admit of timidity. Determined and mighty, such a genius beats down every symptom of weakness. The charge of cowardice, which his behaviour at Molwitz excited against him, is altogether groundless. Under the pressure of the same circumstances, Achilles and Alexander could not have acted otherwise, than Frederick. At the head of the whole Austrian cavalry, General Roemer had routed a Prussian regiment, which contained all the cavalry of that wing where the king was. Frederick perceiving the moment when he had no other chance but this, of being either
cut

cut in pieces or taken, rode off, and by a swarm of fugitives was drawn away so far that he could not rejoin the army, but in the night, and after the battle was completely won. He galloped away from Collin likewise, while in the field of battle, his officers were saying to each other: "Here is our Pultawa!" But must Frederick not avoid falling into the hands of his enemies, and had he not every reason to dread this more than death itself? In all the battles of the seven years war, he exposed himself to every danger, like any major in his army; and in a thousand other situations he has shown, that it was something more than human infirmity subdued by a powerful mind, which inspired him with such courage, intrepidity and boldness. The Spanish officer who
said,

said, " I was brave on this or that
 " day," might be an honest fellow.
 But with Frederick this was not the
 case.

Sometimes his political conduct would
 likewise appear rather timid, when he
 did not choose to enforce his negocia-
 tions with the whole weight of his
 power. But this conduct was directed
 by that very prudent and reasonable prin-
 ciple, which so much distinguished Fre-
 derick's policy from that of other statef-
 men " I never meddle," would he
 often say, " with the internal consti-
 " tution and economy of other go-
 " vernments, except when some immi-
 " nent danger of my own forces me
 " to it."

It, of course, must not be said, that
 the great success of his enterprizes in-
 spired

inspired him with boldness, like many other great men. His most daring political stroke was his taking possession of Herstal with military force, immediately after his accession to the throne. This stroke, it is true, was only an attack on a bishop: but this Bishop of Liege might have been protected by the Imperial court, and this protection rouse against him the animosity of all the less powerful German princes. This bishop, moreover, was the perpetual ally of France; and if this power, at that time, had formed an alliance with Holland, against the young king, his attack on a bishop would have involved him in difficulties, truly great and distressing.

Frederick, with a bold and piercing eye, at the very first glance, looked through every scheme laid before him;

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I

but

but that did not prevent him from its most accurate examination. His wonderful acumen decided the first moment on the propriety and likelihood of the plan. But he never relied entirely upon this first look. He calculated, inquired, desired fuller information from his ministers or generals; and, after all, did not look upon the project in any other light, but that of experiment.

Essentially different from all the other statesmen in Europe, was Frederick in his negotiations. Count Guibert confesses this, with the most generous sincerity, in his panegyrick on this great monarch. "Frederick," says he, "wrote, spoke, and did every thing with a clearness, dignity and preciseness, utterly unknown in our foreign affairs; for here almost all their art consists
" in

“ in shifting and shuffling, in drowning
 “ the sense in phrases, in wrapping
 “ themselves in darkness, and keeping
 “ open some loop-holes, instead of mak-
 “ ing use of nothing but naked truth,
 “ which, much more seldom, at least
 “ with far greater dignity, sinks under
 “ difficulties, than falsehood and arti-
 “ fice. In all his dispatches, signed
 “ with his name, he always appeared
 “ firm and true.”*

To be convinced of the truth of this
 remark, we have only to compare Fre-
 derick's style in political negotiations
 with that of other great courts. He al-
 ways endeavoured to be clear, never to
 be obscure; and no one could ever con-

I 2

vince

* *Eloge du Roi de Prusse, par M. le Comte de
 Guibert, page 71, 72, 73.*

vince him of a falsehood. A most unequivocal proof of the ingenuity of his conduct he would often give, by communicating to a third court, his correspondence with that power he was negotiating with. Copies of all the letters he wrote to the Imperial court, concerning Joseph's attempt to get Bavaria, by an exchange of the Netherlands, he sent to Versailles.

He was always as good as his word, and did never, in the least, break it. The author of a French pamphlet, written, printed, and secretly sold, during Frederick's life, tells us a glaring untruth, when he says, " that Frederick, " by the peace of Hubertsburg, had " promised to restore to Saxony three " thousand eight hundred soldiers, and " afterwards ordered his ministers to " answer

“ answer the Saxon ambassador: The
“ king always grows angry when this
“ point is touched; or, the king is
“ rather astonished, that the court
“ of Dresden should so much insist
“ upon a matter, which would, at once,
“ quench the friendship between the
“ two courts, scarcely kindled anew.”*

It cannot be denied, that, after the peace of Hubertsberg, all the courts concerned, were complaining against each other, about withholding the prisoners of war. Reciprocal reproaches were heard in every court. Austria, especially, with respect to the Prussian prisoners, did not act in a just and candid way, but always broke off the exchanging business. However, the before-men-

I 3 tioned

* Frederick le Grand, page 26.

tioned intercourse between the Prussian ministers and the Saxon ambassador, is a mere fiction.

From Frederick's posthumous works it may, certainly, be inferred, that, though an ally of Russia, by the great and amazing victories of that aspiring power over the Turks, he as well was made uneasy, as all the other courts of Europe. He even made approaches to the court of Vienna, then much disposed to join the Turks against Russia. He was afraid that his friend, the great Czarina, might one day prescribe him the same laws, as she had done to Poland; and the Imperial court would, by no means, agree that the Russians should be masters of Moldavia and Wallachia. From this puzzling situation, Frederick, however, disentangled himself, with an acuteness,

acuteness, mildness and wisdom, that display his political abilities, and the whole of his political character, in the strongest light. Frederick remained true to Catharine. He did not forget that once she gave him back his kingdom Prussia, and that it was she who saved him in the seven years war*. But the en-

I 4

suing

* This matchless princess, whose exalted character is so often misunderstood, under the eighth of February and second of June, 1789, wrote me the following letters: "I am sorry," says she, in the first, "that my contemporaries dread me. It was never my intention to terrify any one. It has always been my wish to be beloved and respected as much as I deserve, and no more. I always thought they slandered me, because they did not know me. I have seen many people endowed with much greater faculties than mine, but never did envy or hate any human being. 'Twas my desire, and my pleasure would have been to make others happy. However, as no man can be so, but in his own way, I often
" met

fuing partition of Poland proves, that
at the same time he did not forget his
OWN

“ met with opposition, I could hardly understand.
“ My ambition certainly was never of a wicked kind.
“ Perhaps, sometimes, I undertook too much for this
“ only reason ; that I fancied mankind much more
“ reasonable, more inclined to *justice, and more sus-*
“ *ceptible of happiness,* than they really are. Almost
“ every man has a cast of dulness and iniquity, that
“ makes him never happy. Did man better listen to
“ the dictates of reason and justice, they would have
“ no occasion for *us or others* upon thrones. I was
“ always fond of philosophy, and my mind has ever
“ been altogether republican. This my innate love
“ and regard for liberty, to be sure, forms a strange
“ contrast with my boundless power ; but no one in
“ all Russia, can ever pretend to say that I abuse it.
“ I care but very little for my own writings, yet have
“ amused myself with several essays, without setting
“ any great value upon them, after the pleasure I feel
“ in their composition, is passed away. The whole
“ of my political conduct has ever consisted in endea-
“ vours to execute such plans, as seemed to me the
“ most advantageous to my country, and the least
“ hurtful to others. I should have pursued better
“ schemes,

own interest. Whoever wants to be thoroughly acquainted with Frederick's

I 5 political

" schemes, had I known them. Europe had no rea-
 " son to be uneasy about my enterprizes. She might
 " have been a gainer by every one of them. Very
 " often I have been paid with ingratitude, but never
 " forgot what was due from me to others. Not unfre-
 " quently, have I taken no other revenge, but to for-
 " give my enemies and do them good. I always was
 " a friend of human kind, and never shall cease to
 " be so."

In the other letter, speaking of the famous French minister, Duke de Choiseul, she says: "All the
 " world knows the consequences of his policy. His
 " groundless fear of Russia was the veil of his passion,
 " spite, envy, and falsehood. His intention was to
 " hurt me, and he exposed only his own weakness, and
 " that of the Turks, whom he enraged and roused
 " against me. Nothing was on his lips but *the politi-
 " cal balance of Europe, that met a physical equipoise,
 " which, at all times, has destroyed the equilibrium of
 " that Power, that talked too much of it. With this
 " cant they throw dust into the eyes of the many,
 " and veil their real intentions, when these stand
 " in the place of justice, the only solid ground-work of*
 " all

political character, has nothing to do but to read and study the history of the negociation which brought about that partition. And woe to him, who, after having done this, does not see, that in the art of timing, patience and subtlety, gentleness and vigour, ingenuity and master-

“all government, and the sacred bond of all human
 “connexions. I think, and am fully convinced, that
 “it fares with the good name of cabinets as with
 “that of private men. Whoever is always blowing
 “up discord on the right and the left, in his neighbour’s houses, gets but little confidence, and those
 “who trust him are deceived. Falsehood and craft
 “are a bad road to fame, and never did Choiseul
 “walk any other. But there are many people who
 “know in politics only these two methods, either
 “to carry oil to the fire, or to fish in foul water.
 “Hence originated, in all ages, those bloody scenes,
 “which we call wars; and princes mad for conquest,
 “or impetuous ministers, never repent before they
 “see the calamity and sufferings brought by them,
 “upon their poor distressed people.”

master-skill, during an important negotiation, Frederick was as great as in war.

Some one has said, that since the seven years war, no European power had dared to scheme any plan of consequence, without consulting Frederick, or fearing him. This is going too far. Since that war, many a plan has been formed, without taking his advice. The occupation of Bavaria, and the scheme of exchanging this country for the Netherlands, were as much of that kind as Count Vergennes's plan of reducing the Seven United Provinces under the crown of France, by means of a discord artfully raised.

Frederick was not more consulted in that great political scheme, which is

said to have been formed in the year 1780; and, according to which, the friends of mankind hoped to see the Russian colours planted on the walls of Constantinople, and the mild and wise laws of Catharine the Great, respected and cherished through that beautiful part of the world, where, since the fall of the Grecian Empire, despotism never is glutted with human blood; where savage brutality tramples on every right of nature, and frightens away all the sciences and arts. Great and sublime is this scheme, though it could neither please Frederick the Great, nor suit the trading nations, who certainly must dread its consequences. Eight hundred thousand men are now* fighting on this scheme;

* In the year 1789.

scheme; and while a savage, inhuman, and barbarous nation, that make the same distinction betwixt themselves and Christians, as a nobleman between himself and a clown, are praying to their prophet Mahomet, for malediction and destruction of the whole Christian world, many a Christian is wishing that the standard of Mahomet may be victorious.

CHAP.

C H A P. X.

On his Conduct towards the Foreign Ministers at his Court, and his Ambassadors to other Courts: On his Attention to Foreign Affairs and Transactions.

AT the private audiences of foreign ministers, no one was present but the minister of the department for foreign affairs. Frederick would certainly never study to please the ministers of ill-designing courts; but, on the contrary, told them many a plain and open truth. Yet he never did personally disoblige them.

On court-days and public audiences at Berlin, the king came for half an hour,

hour, out of his apartment, discoursed with three or four ambassadors, on the most insignificant topics, and would, sometimes, only ask them, how their sovereigns did?

No mortal ever understood better than Frederick, the art of saying things pleasing, in the most obliging manner. The Austrian ambassador, Count Rewizky, a man of great parts and knowledge, was much respected by the king. He understood perfectly the Oriental languages, and this was well known. Once on a public audience, the king asked the Count: "From which language is the word *aga* derived? I do not know it, and no linguist ever gave me a satisfactory answer about its derivation." The Count told him, that the word *aga* came from the Armenian,

nian, and implied, in this language, the idea of a master or superior; that the Saracens and Turks had adopted this word from the Armenian, with them it had passed to Spain, and there been applied to the sex, whence originated the sweet Spanish word *aga*. The king thanked the Count for this explanation before the whole court, as if it contained a discovery of the greatest importance.

Some time after, Joseph the Second treated the Prussian ambaffador at Vienna, with marked unkindness and contempt; for, on public court-days, he conversed with all the other foreign ministers, as usual, but never with Riedesel. Frederick directly used Rewizky in the same manner. He never spoke to him a single word, though sometimes he would
talk

talk a good while with the French, Russian, Saxon, and other ambassadors, standing near Rewizky.

After the death of Baron Riedesel, Count Podewils was sent to Vienna. Podewils was lieutenant in the Gens d'Armes. The emperor treated him kindly, made Count Rewizky his ambassador to the British court, and sent in his place Major General Prince Reuss, to Berlin, whom Frederick used with the same kindness, as Joseph did Lieutenant Podewils.

In some cases Frederick would be so much displeased, that he did not even look at them. This happened to the British ambassador, Mr. Elliot. What, at times, another ambassador might likewise have indulged himself in, Elliot did. He caused Lord Miltown, an Irishman,

Irishman, to break open, in a tavern, the trunks of two American emissaries, and take away their papers. Among these papers were two letters of the king's own hand. From the moment Frederick was informed of this outrage, he never spoke a word with Elliot. As the court of London, notwithstanding this mark of his displeasure, did not recall Elliot, he testified his indignation in a more striking way. "Elliot," he said, "is captain in the militia; I'll send some captain of a free battalion, as my ambassador to London."

Count Lusi was this captain. In Berlin they called him lord chamberlain of king Ulysses; for he was a native of Itaca. But Lusi was a judicious man. He behaved extremely well at the British court, and was much liked there.

When

When the league of the German princes, against the aspiring plans of Joseph the Second, approached to its maturity, and England, on account of the disturbances in Holland, wanted Frederick's friendship, another ambassador was sent to Berlin, and Mr. Elliot to Copenhagen.

There have been times, however, when it might be justly said, that Frederick played the fool with foreign ministers, scoffed or carested them, as he took it in his head. He certainly did not mean any personal offence in doing this; but, at their courts, it was sometimes productive of disagreeable consequences.

The author of a French treatise on Frederick the Great, says: "The greatest to do, no doubt, is made in Berlin
" by

“ by the foreign ministers, who, all the
 “ day long, are talking of the transac-
 “ tions of their respective courts, with-
 “ out knowing any thing of what is
 “ going forwards there.”* This reflec-
 tion is harsh upon the whole, and, in
 some respects, slanderous. Courts will
 certainly never inform their ambassadors
 of the whole system of their political
 conduct, but only supply them with the
 necessary light, respecting such points
 as concern their particular charge. The
 crafty Mirabeau himself tells us, in the
 secret history of the Prussian court, in
 pretty plain terms, that he was in the
 same case. He had not the least intelli-
 gence of the secret connexion of France
 with Joseph the Second, and speaks, for
 this

* Frederick le Grand, page 3.

this reason, with so much impudence of this monarch.

He honoured always with distinction and esteem the personal merit of foreign ministers, if his situation, respecting their courts, did not force him to behave otherwise. But it ought not to be said, that with particular kindness he regarded ambassadors of inferior abilities, and did not exchange a word with those who were distinguished for their superior mental powers; though certainly he would have nothing to do with ambassadors, whose behaviour made it obvious to the least discernment, that they carried on their spy-trade only by artifice and cunning.

No foreign minister ever acquired Frederick's esteem and friendship to such a degree, as the British ambassador, Sir Andrew

Andrew Mitchel. He followed him through the whole of the seven years war, and stood often at his side in the most bloody battles. Near Zorndorf he was close to the king, when he attacked the formidable square, formed by the Russian army under General Fermer. The Russians fired with chain-shot upon that very spot where Frederick was with Mitchel. The king turned to him, and said: "My dear Mitchel, this is not your place." "Is it your's, Sire?" answered Mitchel. "I am sent to your Majesty, and my place is, wherever you are pleased to be." Amidst this slaughter, near Zorndorf, Mitchel never left the king a moment, except towards the close of the battle, when he followed General Shwerin, who, with the regiment of

Gens

Gens d'Armes, made an attack upon some Russian infantry, and a great number of Cossacks. These troops had taken post in a village, and attempted to maintain it. Shwerin dispersed them. Two thousand Cossacks alighted, left their horses, and threw themselves into a large stone building near Quarzen, destined for the housing of sheep. Hence they fired through every hole, and absolutely refused to surrender themselves prisoners of war. At last the roof, under which lay a great deal of hay and straw, caught fire, tumbled down, and the gallant Cossacks were, every one of them, either choaked or burnt to death. I'll keep to myself the reflection which Mitchel made on this fire. Suffice it to say, that Mitchel never left the king, who scarce ever loved any man like him, and

and was never more sincerely beloved, than by this truly excellent Englishman. The king was so very fond of his company in the seven years war, that often, many weeks together, he dined and supped with no one but Mitchel. The day before the glorious battle of Liegniz, fought at a period so dreadfully critical, Frederick entreated his friend Mitchel, as Cato did his in Utica, to withdraw from him. Mitchel burnt all his papers; for he thought that all was lost. But he did not leave the hero; who, by a complete victory over Laudon, rescued himself once more from impending perdition.

Frederick knew extremely well how to punish the curiosity of foreign ministers, which sometimes would border upon impudence. There was no such thing

thing as finding out, what was passing in the bosom of this great prince. About the latter end of his reign, these gentlemen would, therefore, point all their political cunning and professional tricks, to the spying out the state of his health. But even respecting this point, they were often foiled and completely puzzled. Once, when the king was very well, he bid all his servants shrug up their shoulders, look sorrowful up to Heaven, and answer nothing when they should be asked, how the king did? Frederick gave this order in so strict and severe a manner, that they did not dare to disobey. The French ambassador, Marquis de Pons, sent, as usual, his secret emissaries, to inquire after the king's health. The servant to whom they addressed themselves, answered not

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K

a word,

a word, lifted pitiful looks to Heaven, and acted his part in a masterly manner. The marquis directly wrote to his sovereign: "That the King of Prussia
 " was so very ill, that before this dispatch reached Versailles, he would
 " be no more!" This letter came into Lewis's hands in the latter end of the year 1782; and the day he received the new year's compliments before the whole court, he said in the noblest manner: "I can give you an information
 " for which I am very sorry: the greatest man in Europe is dead! I have got
 " some secret intelligence that this hour the King of Prussia is no more!"—Some courtiers replied that the Prussian ambassador Count Golz, knew nothing of his sovereign's decease. But Lewis
 main-

maintained his point, asserting, that he was sure of it.

At the very same time that this passed at Versailles, Frederick arrived at Berlin, shewed himself every where, was whole hours together present at military exercises, and made himself so very young, that (which was uncommon in his last years) he even invited ladies to supper. The poor Marquis de Pons stood petrified by all these manœuvres, which at last he was obliged to relate to his court, confessing that he was deceived.

The partition of Poland was kept a profound secret during the negociations, which brought it about, though the French court perceived that something respecting Poland was going forwards. The Duke de Choiseul gave the French

K 2

minister

minister at Berlin to understand, that he wished to see, cost what it might, some of Frederick's instructions for his minister at Warsaw, concerning this business.—The French minister left no stone unturned. He chose some Berlin knave to spy it out, and this rogue applied to one of the king's privy secretaries, offering him a thousand louis d'ors, for a copy of such an instruction. But this secretary was an honest man, and discovered the whole knavery to the king. Frederick gave him leave to draw a dispatch totally false, and to deliver it to the fellow, and take the thousand louis d'ors. This was done, the money paid, and the great discovery went, with a special messenger, to Versailles.

Choiseul had too much penetration not to look through the trick. He assured

fured the ambassador directly, that he had been deceived; but the French court continued to know so little of the principal articles of the treaty of partition, that before it was concluded, Choiseul's successor in office, the Duke d'Aiguillon, was forced to take a very bold step with the king himself.

Frederick, who never failed duly to resent the curiosity of foreign ministers, when carried too far, found it, however, beneath his dignity to let his post-masters open the ambassador's letters. He knew very well that letters coming and going with the post, do not contain secrets of consequence, and scorned to authorize post-masters, without honour and principle, from mere curiosity, to commit such shameful violence. But he kept secret observers of the foreign mi-

K 3

nisters.

nisters. A Mr. Ellerman held this place for many years, and had a large salary.

It is well known that Frederick sometimes, but very badly, chose his ministers at foreign courts. This puzzled many people, for it is generally supposed, that every sovereign and government select for such places the most judicious, acute, and clever men in the whole country, geniusses of the first rank, and especially of a superfine scent. Those who did not know Frederick's principles, respecting this point, would suppose that he made a bad choice from motives of an ill-understood parsimony, or the erroneous opinion, that it were of no consequence to him, to have ambassadors skilful and versed in the art of watching the play of the human passions,

sions, or even to keep among their followers some little diplomatic mice, creeping in every hole, and fit for every thing.

A prepossession, he did not conceal, led him to choose his ambassadors badly, and to pay them worse. This prejudice consisted in the opinion, that the abilities of an ambassador were of no moment. "He is a letter carrier," he would say, "whose business is to deliver his instructions and get the answer." Frederick thought that the success of a negotiation did not depend on the capacity of such letter carriers, but often on a concurrence of fortuitous events.

All his instructions were precise, and he desired his ambassadors strictly to follow them, and, with exactness, to report the answers they received. If they

K 4

behaved

behaved in their places, as prudent and judicious men, they might hope for preferment on their return. He scarcely ever made his ambassadors suffer for the ill success of their commission; and when Baron Klinggræf, before the seven years war, returned from Vienna, with the decisive answer of Mary Theresa, he did not fall out with him for the ill tidings which he brought.

Frederick would often negotiate himself with the foreign ministers at his court, and sometimes for important purposes, send to a foreign court, where he had an ambassador, men, with whom he kept up an epistolary correspondence, quite unknown to his minister there.— If he thought his secretary of embassy very clever, he corresponded with him, not with the ambassador. Thus was
the

the present Prussian minister at Madrid, Mr. Sandoz, when secretary to the Prussian embassy at Paris, for many years the king's correspondent, and the Prussian ambassador saw and knew nothing of their letters.

Frederick never put too much confidence in the reports of his ambassadors, and their mistakes could never mislead him. He was not the man to be amused by insignificant intelligence and false observations, idle conjectures, and nonsensical *bulletins*. His acuteness, however, has been so little acknowledged, that they went even so far as to assert, he had been most miserably deceived by the emissaries, whom he sent to Constantinople, for the purpose of sifting the secrets of the Divan.

K 5

Before.

Before the seven years war, the king had a minister at Constantinople, whose name was Rexin, and, immediately on the beginning of that war, he sent thither, with secret commissions, the marquis de Varennes, lieutenant colonel in his service. The marquis, however, did not stay there long; for, after the battle of Collin, on his return home, he joined a great number of sick and wounded Prussian officers, going to Dresden, who were surrounded by an Austrian party, and he was killed with General Manstein, who came wounded from Collin.

Rexin's negotiations at Constantinople were unsuccessful, but not from any neglect of his duty. At first, for a long time, he could not obtain an audience from the Sultan, and afterwards
he

he was opposed by the British ambassador, Mr. Porter, which would be incredible, if the king did not affirm it himself*. Besides, the sultan was a man devoid of all energy; and the great sums sent from Berlin to Constantinople, were without any effect, because the courts of Vienna and Versailles spent the like sums to keep the Turks inactive. At last, however, Regin signed a treaty of friendship with the Grand Vizier, and shortly, more than an hundred thousand Turks assembled near Belgrade. The sultan seemed inclined to employ this army against Austria, when Peter the Third gave him to understand, that he should no ways obstruct this design. But, after Peter's death, the Turks were

K 6 again

*Oeuvres posthumes. Vol. III. pag. 351.

again averse to the defensive alliance, Frederick had offered them long ago. These are facts the king relates himself, which prove, that he was deceived by the Turks, but not by Rexin: and, had he even known, before the commencement of the seven years war, that he could hope no assistance from the Turks, he must have taken the field with the same rashness and resolution, or had nothing less to expect, than the downfall of his throne.

Near the end of this war, he chose an excellent ambassador for Constantinople, in the person of Colonel Zegelin. He acquired great confidence and authority with the divan, and this council was much influenced by him. According to the commands of his sovereign, he was of the most essential service to the Russian

Russian court, especially at that time when it was very necessary, closely to observe the Austrian ambassador, Baron Thugut. Through Zegelin, Frederick dissuaded the Turks from their baneful war with the Russians, by which he gained great credit with the Turks. Zegelin, of course, had a considerable share in all the negotiations, respecting the peace with Russia. On his return from Constantinople, the king gave him every proof of his satisfaction, and as he did not choose to re-enter into service, and had got very considerable, he retired in Berlin.

Equally arduous, and not less important, were Colonel Golz's negotiations in the Crimea. Frederick sent this worthy officer to Kherim Gueray, the Tartar Khan, to rouse him against Russia and
Austria.

Austria. Colonel Golz conducted this negotiation with so much dexterity and prudence, that the Khan offered the king forty thousand men. Frederick highly applauded his ambassador's conduct ; but not Count Mirabeau, who endeavours to depreciate it, and gives all the merit of this negotiation to Mr. Biskamp, interpreter to the embassy*. But where could Mirabeau get *indubitable* information on this point, he, who so eagerly caught at *every* word that fell from *every* mouth, and with whom any idle talk had as much weight as demonstration.

Did Mr. Golz publish the history of his embassy and negotiations in the Crimea, Frederick's penetration would be

* Oeuvres posthumes. Vol I. page 119.

be placed in as full a light, as the gross ignorance with which Mr. Mirabeau and his Berlin informers, talk of this Tartarian embassy. Frederick, no doubt, knew as well how to conduct himself at Constantinople and Baſſahifaria, as in any other place, no other sovereign being better informed of foreign affairs than he. The traces of ignorance in such matters, which seem to be visible in his posthumous works, therefore are very puzzling, and confound you the more, when they appear, even with respect to such transactions, that nearly concerned himself. Nothing, to be sure, interested him more than what passed at the court of Vienna, concerning Prussia; and, however in his relation of Seckendorf's arrest and enlargement, he mistakes a milder treatment of this persecuted prisoner,

soner, during the reign of Francis the First, for his release, which did not take place, but after this emperor's death.

A French writer has charged Frederick with an ignorance of foreign affairs, much grosser and stranger in his opinion. "Frederick," says he, "had a
 " very wrong idea of France. He
 " thought all Frenchmen were a large
 " society of gay, young people, con-
 " stantly running and trifling at the
 " ring of pleasure; he was really of
 " opinion, that the finances of France,
 " her laws, her wars, were nothing but
 " in the hands of designing, crafty
 " and deceitful fellows, to make their
 " fortunes*."

If

If this really was Frederick's opinion of France, he knew the Frenchmen of his time extremely well. But, perhaps, it was only that author's intention, with reflection on Frederick, to mark a hint to the French ministry, in what hands were the finances of France, her laws, and the conduct of her wars. The sentiments which this writer ascribes to Frederick, represent a striking likeness of the French court, during the reign of Lewis XV, after the death of cardinal Fleury, and under Lewis XVI, till very near the present time. Nothing then had any kind of stability and firmness. War and peace issued from Madame de Pompadour; and the great Mary Theresa had scarcely called her, in a letter, *Ma cousine!* when the French ambassador

fixed

fixed the time when Madame de Pompadour would send Marshal d'Etrees over the Wefer, to swallow Hanover.

Though native of Lorrain, the Duke de Choiseul did not merely follow some natural bent, in proposing an alliance between France and Austria. He likewise propped his own administration, and inseparably connected himself with Madame de Pompadour, who not only was entirely won over to the interest of Austria, but also very fond of constantly marching armies, for the sole purpose of giving one command or another to some of her creatures. The most respectable officers in the French army would aloud and openly say : “ That
 “ harlot would march our army against
 “ our good God himself, for the sole
 “ pleasure

“ pleasure of nominating generals*.”

And Count Nesselrod, now Russian ambassador at Berlin, heard himself the Duke de Choiseul say, to Maa me de Pompadour, “ you must confess, madam, that we are leading France “ pretty gaily.*” With such levity France was ruled in those days !

What afterwards passed in Versailles and Paris, proves, with the most striking evidence, every trait of French levity, so deservedly censured by Frederick. Choiseul was a man of great understanding and uncommon activity in the war department; but, at the same time, violent,

* Cette catin feroit marcher notre armée contre le bon Dieu, pour avoir le plaisir, de nommer des Généraux.

* Convenez, Madame ! que nous menons la France bien gayment.

lent, imprudent, vain and airy. Russia's greatness, under Catharine's sceptre, seemed to him too vast. He calculated the means of humbling this formidable empire; set, according to this calculation, the Turks on Russia; and was convinced, by six years uninterrupted victories of the Russian army and navy, how egregiously he had miscounted. After the inglorious, at least for France, very humiliating peace of 1763, a privy council was held at Versailles, concerning the demolishing of the fortifications of Chandemago, with which France was forced to comply. 'Twas in the forenoon. After some hours deliberation, they bit into the sour apple. The oldest member of the council could not refrain from crying out: "Gone now, " for ever gone, is the respectability of
 " France,

“ France, in Europe, and never more
 “ can she remount, to that first rank
 “ among the European powers, which
 “ she has maintained so long.*” “ Well,
 “ Sir,” answered Choiseul, “ let us de-
 “ scend to the second ; but pray dont
 “ forget that we must go to dinner, for
 “ it just strikes three”.† As the mo-
 dern history of France abounds with
 such traits, Frederick, I think, might
 hold the French nation and government;
 for what they really *were*, without de-
 serving any reproach.

But,

* Voila donc cette grande consideration de la France perdue en Europe, et jamais elle ne remontera parmi les puissances, à la première place, qu'elle maintint si long-temps.

† Hé bien ! Monsieur, nous descendrons à la seconde : mais songez, qu'il faut aller diner ; car voila trois heures qui sonne.

But, had Frederick lived in the memorable year 1789, or, did he yonder, in the land of immortality, learn, what, during that famous summer, passed in this under world of our's, would he, who so justly has always admired the mental powers of the French, not be struck with admiration, on seeing the courage of that nation, who so long, with pleasing levity and a cheerful mind, bore the iron yoke of despotism, now, over its bloody splinters, swing the banner of freedom? Frederick might, perhaps, feel that a numerous, mighty and spirited nation, is more to be feared than an hired army, and recollect that Montesquieu, Rousseau and Voltaire, (two of whom, at least, he highly admired) conveyed to the bosoms of Frenchmen, that inextinguishable flame which shakes the

the

the throne of the Bourbons. Montesquieu, Rousseau and Voltaire, did certainly not teach the mild and polite people of Paris, the use of the lamp-iron; they did not tell them, under the fair name of liberty, to fill France with rapine, murder and fire. But did not the spirit proceed from them, that disclosed to the man and citizen the rights of the citizen and the man! That spirit which, in a glorious moment, inspired some of the French nobility and clergy, with the sublime thought of giving up all their prerogatives and feudal rights; the spirit that, sooner or later, at every sunrise of reason, with death and annihilation threatens all monarchial or republican despotism.

However, Frederick might, perhaps, say: "In July, 1789, the French were
" visited

“ visited with a fit of canine madness.
 “ They generally call it energy or patri-
 “ otism. But, ’tis nothing but the un-
 “ bridled licentiousness of famished
 “ slaves, one of whose arms they had
 “ unshackled, without considering, that
 “ they certainly would make use of this
 “ arm, to burst asunder all their other
 “ bonds. The French can never be
 “ Englishmen or Americans: they will
 “ always remain Frenchmen. More
 “ than a generation must pass away,
 “ and much blood be spilt before this
 “ nation can ripen to any wise enjoy-
 “ ment of liberty. France, at present,
 “ is like an expiring planet, and much
 “ nearer her dissolution than true manly
 “ freedom. The greatest difficulties
 “ will but then arise, when taxes are
 “ to be levied on an armed people, re-
 “ volting

“volting for the sole purpose of shaking
 “off every kind of burden. The French
 “are in the way, not to an English
 “or American constitution, but to a
 “Polish government*, with this small
 “difference however, that in Poland
 “the nobility and clergy are every
 “thing, and the people nothing; and
 “in France the people will become
 “every thing, and the nobility and
 “clergy nothing. In politicks you can
 “scarce be sure of any thing. May
 “be, therefore, the French do not
 “destroy themselves; but every foreign
 “army will find in this distressed
 “country an oppressed party on their
 “side.”

* Not without fear of making a very unnecessary remark, I beg leave to remind the reader, that this was written before the late glorious revolution in Poland.

TRANSLATOR.

VOL. I.

L

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

On the secret Sources of Information, which he received of what was passing at Foreign Courts, and other important Affairs. -

FREDERICK discovered the political secrets of foreign courts, by a variety of means. His sagacity would always choose the most convenient way, and surmount every obstacle. Such discoveries often cost him amazing sums: sometimes, however, he was indebted for them entirely to some lucky incident.

With much stupidity, and without any insight into Frederick's political
pru-

prudence, one of his anecdotists tells us: "That he never rewarded any foreign minister or officer for the discovery of important secrets.*" And Mr. Denina says: "It is reported, that Frederick once promised a present of an hundred thousand dollars to the Russian Chancellor Bestuchef; but afterwards, from economical motives, did not make it;† and in another place: "The king complains in his works, that the minister whom he ordered to pay the hundred thousand dollars, did not pay them.‡" But men of great respectability and weight have assured me, that this money,

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if

* Anecdotes and character-traits. Vol. 15, p. 24.

† Essai sur la vie et le règne de Frederick II. p. 126.

‡ Essai sur la vie et le règne de Frederick II. p. 174.

if ever promised to Bestuchef, was certainly paid, because the king was never more liberal, than for such momentous purposes, and, especially at the Russian court, during the reign of the empresses Ann and Elizabeth. Not far from Berlin is a royal domain, the revenue of which, amounting to many thousand dollars *per annum*, was constantly bestowed on the leading minister or favourite at the court of Petersburg; and, as they changed, went from one hand to the other. Prince Menzikof enjoyed it first; after him Biron; then Count Munnick; and, at last, it is supposed, Bestuchef.—But Bestuchef, it seems, sold himself to the best bidder, since Frederick, one single case excepted*, calls him, every where,

* *Oeuvres posthumes*, Vol. III. pag. 269.

where, his inveterate and declared enemy. Frederick, who otherwise managed the public revenue with the greatest frugality, would, with respect to such expences, be rather profuse, because they served the public utility. Very great sums, which I am not allowed to mention, have been spent on gentlemen in foreign service, who any ways favoured his views, and discovered to him interesting political arcana.

Great presents were received from him by a foreign statesman, now deceased, whom I knew very well, and whom the king's posthumous works have often, in the liveliest colours, presented to my view; who, in Potsdam, spoke to Frederick like a Roman dictator, and whose hot and violent behaviour there, he compares to the conduct of Prætor Popilius,

L 3

at

at the court of King Antiochus. I do not precisely know the sums which he received. But this is incontestably true, that the king, to vindicate his right against a certain town of consequence, gave him twenty thousand dollars, but without any benefit to his cause; for this town gave him more, and won him to their interest. This foreign statesman, I am told, never did him any real service, and this hastened his disgrace. A general of great penetration, whom I likewise know very well, for that, and other reasons, was sent by Frederick to the court which that statesman served, published there his secret tricks and caused his downfall.

Mr. Denina relates, how Frederick, through Menzel, keeper of the rolls in Dresden, discovered the impending dangers

gers that compelled him to commence the seven years war*. But another very fortuitous circumstance, seemingly unknown to Mr. Denina, disclosed likewise to Frederick, the hostile designs of the two Imperial courts. The brother of the secretary to the Austrian ambassador, Mr. Weingarten, was second secretary to that embassy. He married a Berlin lady, of whom he was extremely fond, and could not withstand the temptation of revealing to her the imminent destruction of the Prussian monarchy. This good lady was altogether unable to conceal in her bosom this important and distressing news. She prevailed on her husband to inform Frederick of it. He

L 4 did

* Essai sur la vie et le règne de Frederick II.
page 132 & 133.

did so, and was afterwards by him protected and rewarded.

I know instances wherein the king has received original papers of the greatest importance, out of the cabinet of Versailles. But the circumstances of such transactions cannot be detailed, because it would be indiscreet to name the persons who rendered him such services. Sometimes the king would conceal such names, and the matter itself, from every one, except some of his secretaries.

Very remarkable, and almost comical, are the contrivances Frederick made use of, especially towards the end of the reign of Mary Theresa, to learn the secrets of the court of Vienna. This empress felt as strongly, as any other human being, the want of communicating herself to some friend, with this difference,

ence, however, that, for others, one such friend will suffice, and the good and loving heart of Mary Theresa wanted more. Among her confidants were some ladies, as good-natured and communicative as she. Their chambermaids availed themselves of this disposition, and Frederick learned, by every mail, all the secrets of these chambermaids and the court of Vienna.

This happened thus. Frederick bid his confidential ministers engage in his service some sprightly, shrewd, beautiful, smart, young fellows, endowed with talents, and especially with great *magnetic* powers. They were sent to Vienna, and arrived and lived there under a thousand different colours. The chief point of their instruction was, to get acquainted with the chambermaids of

L 5

certain

certain ladies, to *fall in love* with them, pay them their addresses, and exert their utmost endeavours to kindle an amorous flame in the *maiden* bosoms of these griffets. Such a smart young emissary got an annual salary of five hundred dollars, and, whatever they were obliged to spend on such *soubrettes*, as they were ordered to *magnetize*, was repaid them besides. It was their duty, as soon as the chambermaids had taken the bait and the intrigue was set a-going, to give some Prussian minister, weekly reports of their discoveries. In the last years their letters went from Vienna to Munich, and from thence to Berlin. For, at that time, this was the only road on which the letters were not opened. It is incredible what discoveries were made by these political *magnetizers*.

sizers. Sometimes *they were in love* with such griffets two years together, and wrote letters, which contained much greater, and more important discoveries, than all the reports of the ambassadors.

Other courts chose for the same purpose, young, clever and handsome secretaries, or gentlemen of the embassy; and sometimes the ambassadors *magnetized* themselves, not the waiting maids, but their ladies. But all this would not do. For not only every ambassador, but also every secretary, gentleman, or chaplain of an embassy, is a suspicious character, and by his very office marked on his front. Frederick's emissaries, on the contrary, could *magnetize* a long while, before their trade was discovered. For they were prohibited from every kind of connexion and intercourse with the

L 6

Prussian.

Prussian embassy at Vienna. If, however, they raised the least suspicion, which now and then did happen, they were instantly recalled, and some other more dexterous *adonis* sent in their place.

Such, and a thousand other diplomatic tricks are played at every court, and by every court of Europe. Many a monarch would abhor what his ambassador does, either himself, or through the third, fourth and tenth hand, if he knew it. Politicks allow of any thing, not in theory and books, but in practice. What Frederick did was necessary both in peace and war.

When General Fouquet, after a glorious defence, was taken, with the small remainder of his corps, near Landshut, the king, not knowing the misfortune of that hero, was marching through Luface,

to

to relieve him. While General Hulsen made all speed towards Frederick, who had taken post near Radeberg, at day-break, an Austrian officer, with a trumpeter, appears at the most advanced Prussian out-post, and wants to see the commanding officer about some important business, which, he said, concerned the king himself. General Hulsen comes. The Austrian officer gives him the most detailed account of Fouquet's action and misfortune; tells him, that this news had been brought the night before by a special messenger, sent from Laudon to Daun, through Bohemia, and that it could not reach the king so soon by the way, through Silesia and Luface, on the other side of the mountains.—“That I may be able,” replied General Hulsen, “to report this properly to
“ the

“ the king, I must beg the favour of
 “ your name.” You may tell your so-
 “ vereign,” answered the officer, “ that
 “ an Austrian general, his friend, has
 “ brought this news,” and rode off.—
 There are at least an hundred persons
 still living, who know this extraordina-
 ry anecdote, attested by the famous
 Prussian General Warnery*, though he
 does not mention the circumstances just
 related. In the year 1757, died, a much
 respected Austrian general, then with-
 out command. It raised great asto-
 nishment, that an immense sum of Fre-
 derick d’ors, of the very last coining,
 were found in his bureau.

* Warnery’s Works, Vol. VIII. page 84.

C H A P. XII.

On the English Alliance in the Seven Years War, and its Consequences : On the Partition of Poland, and the Germanic League.

“ IT was an egregious political blunder,” says M. Denina, “ that Frederick the Great, in the seven years war, preferred an alliance with England to that with France.” In former times, only Frenchmen would think and say so. Frederick, however, from his earliest youth, was too well acquainted with the political situation of Europe, to swerve from the wisest principles, at the eve of that war. Had the Duke de Nivernois offered him six islands of more
 impor-

importance than the poor, miserable island of Tobago, he would not have accepted them. He knew too well which were the powers that aspired to supremacy, and scorned to be employed by France as a tool to crush England.

Prussia would be but a very insignificant state, if the preponderating powers of Europe were suffered to turn the scale. One single event proves, to a demonstration, how much Frederick, by connecting himself with England, took the better side. Out of this alliance, it is true, afterwards arose one evil, which he did not and could not foresee; namely, that Lord Bute became a man of so much consequence and weight, and, towards the end of the seven years war, one of Frederick's most dangerous enemies.

The

The event alluded to before, and not sufficiently explained, in the history of those times, transpired in the well-known violent quarrel between Marshal d'Etrees and Lieutenant General Maillebois. The general charged the marshal, "that he had not passed the Weser in due time, and not broke into the electorate of Hanover, with necessary dispatch." D'Etrees replied, in a printed memoir, "that this charge proved the great want of judgment, or gross ignorance of the general: he, the marshal, had, two years before, as French ambassador to the court of Vienna, signed the secret treaty, by which France had promised to invade the electorate of Hanover, on a certain determined day."

A pro

A profound peace subsisted then between Hanover and Vienna. Dreadful, therefore, was this proof of the wavering instability of all connexions with the Imperial court. Baron Gemmingen, then Hanoverian minister at the Germanic diet, in the bitterest terms reproached the Imperial ministers with this treacherous conduct. "What must become of all trust and confidence," said he, "when we see that Austria, by George II. rescued from ruin and destruction, in the midst of peace, and before she has, in any respect, broke with her deliverer, makes it a condition of a secret treaty with France, that the troops of this power, on a certain fixed day, shall invade his German dominions?"

Mr.

Mr. Denina, by this single proof, must be convinced, that Frederick's foresight must have been very shallow, if, after these sentiments of his enemies were known, he had chosen to be their friend, and joined France against Great Britain and Hanover. For the moment, he would have lessened the danger of his situation; and been oppressed by his enemies, at some other time, with more infallibility of success.

England, it is true, afterwards did not favour Frederick; but this was of no great consequence to him. Towards the close of the seven years war, Bute was by no means his friend, from motives very strange indeed, which I have related in the fifth chapter of this work. But, Lord Stormont was as little his friend, for reasons not recorded in the
annals

annals of that time, which I am going to relate.

Stormont endeavoured, through the whole of his administration, to increase the variance between Great Britain and Prussia. He was of opinion, that, notwithstanding the family treaty, concluded by the Bourbon courts, England should renew her old connexion with Austria; and this opinion was no less a political blunder, than the war with Holland, which originated with him.

Frederick would often relate, smilingly, how, in Saxony, he became acquainted with his great enemy, Lord Stormont. At the beginning of the seven years war, Stormont was British ambassador to the court of Dresden.— Frederick had just, near Pirna, inclosed the

the Saxon army, and Lord Stormont had married a Saxon lady. At first, by way of letter, Stormont intreated the king to let the whole Saxon army escape; and, as Frederick did not choose to comply with this demand, the Lord went himself to him in his camp, and tried, in an *elegant speech*, to persuade the king, that it was highly his interest, to compound with Austria and Saxony as soon as possible.

This *elegant speech* of an English ambassador was directly adverse to the interest of England. Sir Andrew Mitchel was present. The king, without giving any answer to the orator, contented himself with looking at Mitchel, who was not so forbearing as Frederick. He took Stormont to the window, rebuked him severely, threatened, and then returned

turned to the king, to whom he whispered something, the purport of which I know, but keep to myself. All this, and what Mitchel whispered to the king, I learnt from Baron Horst, who had it from Frederick himself.

But, notwithstanding this strange conduct of the noble lord, he was afterwards made minister of Great Britain. Had he had power and influence enough to maintain himself in this place, Britain would never have been united with Prussia, because Frederick could not oblige Lady Stormont, with letting the whole Saxon army escape. King George the Third, of his own accord, and uninfluenced by any English minister, founded afterwards, and effected that wise and happy union with Prussia, in agitation between these two courts,
since

since the commencement of that negotiation which brought about the league of the German princes. Frederick, at that time, with friendly confidence, applied to George the Third, and this monarch acceded to that league, with all the sincerity of his fair and candid mind.

The partition of Poland was, no doubt, a great political transaction of Frederick the Great, which, through all Europe, excited as much astonishment as envy. As to what Frederick gained by this transaction, it is commonly ill understood. He would not have known his own interest had he at the dismemberment of Poland, not endeavoured to proportion his increase of power to that of Austria and Russia.— This was contradicted, however, by
some

some idle rumour, at that time circulating through Berlin, that General Lentulus, from sordid selfishness, had neglected the king's interest at Warsaw.— But Lentulus was only the representing Prussian minister at the Polish court, and by no means the real negociator. Frederick's only instrument in this negociation, was, not a Swiss, but a Hanoverian, the Chevalier Benoit. This respectable, acute and dexterous gentleman, received the strictest and most determinate instructions, immediately, from the king himself.

Frederick's true interest was by no means neglected. It is true, that in land and number of people he got less than Austria and Russia. But I have been assured, by profound statesmen, that his share is of greater value than those of
Russia

Russia and Austria put together. For this reason, a politician of deep and extensive knowledge, the Austrian ambassador to the court of Berlin, Baron Swieten, said openly and without any reserve: "Both the Imperial courts, I
 " must confess, on the partition of Po-
 " land, have estimated, like noblemen,
 " at the division of tillage-ground; but
 " Frederick, like a sovereign, who has
 " nothing in view but the true advan-
 " tage of his realm."

An inestimable advantage gained by the king, was the command of the Vistula, by means of the toll at Vordan and the port of Dantzic. All the imports and exports of Poland by sea, must pass through the Prussian territory and Prussian hands. Thus the king of Prussia became master of the commerce of Poland.

It is particularly remarkable, that the rivers running northward from the borders of Courland to the Moselle, are all by tolls and posts, in the power of Prussia. The kingdom of Poland, through its whole extent, has but one single port left, namely, that of Polangen, in the district belonging to Prince Sacken. But there is no deep extensive inland stream ; all the navigable rivers join in the Prussian dominions, and whatever is shipped on them, is subject to Prussian duties and regulations. Even the important saltworks which fell to the Emperor's share, were prevented from answering the sanguine expectations of the Imperial court, by Frederick's importation of sea-salt.

France, through the whole of this negotiation, was kept in a never-ceasing rotation

tation of anxiety. How eagerly Choiseul grasped every information, however trifling, he could catch; and in how masterly a manner Frederick checked and punished the impudent curiosity of the French ambassador at Berlin, I have related in the tenth chapter of this work. But France went yet further without more success. The Duc d'Aiguillon, Choiseul's successor, sent another secret emissary to Berlin. Metra is his name, and he is still living. D'Aiguillon offered the king the guaranty of France for any part of Poland he might choose, under this condition, that he should give up his connexions with Austria and Russia, concerning the partition of Poland. We may easily imagine, how he looked at this emissary.

M 2

Frederick's

Frederick's art of negotiating, never shone in a brighter light, than through all the stages of that negotiation which effected the Germanic league. Since the discovery of that great Oriental scheme, mentioned at the end of the ninth chapter, consequently, since 1781, under the veil of the profoundest secret, Frederick had kept up an epistolary correspondence with the noble-minded, patriotic elector of Mayence, concerning a league of the German princes. The Prussian ministers knew very well the existence of such a correspondence: but none of them had the least knowledge of its object. Notwithstanding his imaginary omniscience, Count Vergennes had not the least shadow of suspicion or conjecture of this transaction. For in June, 1784, he said to Baron Horst, at Versailles:

faillies : " Your sovereign is the greatest
" prince of his age : he has achieved
" amazing things, but has no ally. He
" is quite alone, and not likely to get
" any real support by any alliance I can
" think of.*"

Long before that time, when Vergennes, with such little foresight, talked at Versailles, Frederick's important negotiations, concerning the Germanic league, had been on foot. It was a great while after, that the first rumour of this league reached the cabinets of Europe. No one, however, was more

M 3

astonished

* "Votre roi est le plus grand prince de son siècle ;
" il a fait les plus grandes choses, mais il n'a aucun
" allié. Il s'est mis tout seul, et il ne peut avoir
" l'apparence de trouver des secours réels par une
" alliance, quelle que je puisse imaginer."

astonished than Vergennes. For he wanted but little political arithmetic to compute, that Hanover, Saxony, Hesse and Brunfwick, are able to assist the King of Prussia, in a few weeks, with a more formidable army of the choicest and best disciplined troops, than any power in Europe.

The deep fundamental cause of the Germanic league, lies, no doubt, in the dangerous connexion of Austria, with the quondam kingdom of France.—Prussia placed this danger in the strongest view. George the Third saw and felt what would be the consequence, if France were suffered to become a preponderating power, and, especially, if she should succeed in her attempt, to subdue Holland, and joined that powerful league.

CHAP.

C H A P. XIII.

On Frederick's Sentiments concerning the Jesuits : On his Idea of establishing a Roman Catholic Bishoprick in Cleves, and the mock Hope he gave Clement the Thirteenth that he would embrace the Catholic Religion.

FREDERICK's sentiments respecting the Jesuits, are clearly expressed in his posthumous works, and, especially, in his letters to d'Alembert.—Therefore, it is inconceivable how some writers have dared to assert, that he had been a declared enemy of the Jesuits.

He hated in them what was hateful. When he wrote the history of the seven

M 4 years

years war, he related the causes of their expulsion from Portugal, as they were then understood. But after Pombal's death, this memorable event has been unravelled and placed in a quite different light. I have heard from Count Sufa, Portuguese ambassador to the court of Berlin, a gentleman of great parts and knowledge, the complete reverse of what Frederick tells us respecting the pretended conspiracy against the king's life, plotted by the Jesuits. "The Jesuits," said Count Sufa, "have deserved, for many reasons, to be driven out of Portugal. But, with respect to this supposed conspiracy, they were as innocent as the duke d'Aveiros, and other persons of the first rank, who, on account of this false accusation, suffered the most cruel death. Nobody had

" had any intention to murder the king.
 " No one could know, that the king
 " was in that carriage, which was fired
 " at, in the night-time, by some hire-
 " lings of the duke d'Aveiros. This
 " carriage belonged to one of the king's
 " pages, who had laid a plan of mur-
 " dering that duke. On this carriage
 " they fired, at the very time when the
 " king usually held a cabinet-council
 " with his principal ministers. But,
 " his majesty having an intrigue with a
 " nun, chose that time to visit the nun-
 " nery in the carriage of his page*.—

M 5

" His

* Portugal is that christian country where the fair
 are watched and sequestered in the most shocking
 manner; and where, for this very reason, men are so
 inventive, ingenious and successful, in the art of con-
 quering the female heart. The great Count de Lippe,
 whose name is still highly respected in Portugal, had
 an intrigue with a Portuguese nun, and got a daughter,
 who is still living in Lisbon.

“ His premier, the marquis of Pombal,
 “ had but very little difficulty to per-
 “ suade this weak and timorous
 “ prince*, that it was the duke d’Avei-
 “ ros’s intention to murder him, and
 “ he availed himself of this favourable
 “ opportunity of consigning to the exe-
 “ cutioner’s hands the first nobility of
 “ Portugal. Noblemen of the first
 “ distinction, utterly innocent, were be-
 “ headed or broke on the wheel, be-
 “ cause they were obnoxious to the
 “ marquis of Pombal. As little did
 “ the Jesuits think on regicide, as they
 “ knew of the intended murder of the
 “ page,

* After this accident, the king was so fearful,
 that he never was without charged pistols ; and at his
 death were found, in his bed, two loaded pistols under
 his pillow.

“ page, in whose carriage the king went
 “ to his nun. Father Malagrida was a
 “ superstitious blockhead, an enthusiast,
 “ that spent his whole life in company
 “ with old women, whom he told many
 “ a wonderful tale, wrought out in his
 “ fanatic brain.”

Pope Clement the Thirteenth, however silly he may be otherwise, was, therefore, very right in vindicating and supporting the Jesuits, as far as they were charged with an intended murder of the King of Portugal. Frederick related this event according to the report, which Pombal had circulated through all Europe, knowing, however, better than any one else, how many events have happened these forty years in Europe, the true causes of which are the abso-

M 6

lute

lute reverse of what they are supposed to be, through all the world.

Notwithstanding the severe judgment, Frederick in his posthumous works, passes on the Portuguese Jesuits, he wrote and spoke of their fraternity in general, on many other occasions, with great kindness. He held them in high estimation, on account of their merits in instructing young people, in every branch of polite literature. “ We
 “ should destroy nothing ;” said he, to the prince de Ligne, “ why, then, des-
 “ troy the Jesuits, these depositaries of
 “ the Greek and Roman graces, these
 “ eminent professors? But while, my
 “ brethren, the Catholic, most Chris-
 “ tian, and Apostolic Majesties, are ex-
 “ pelling the Jesuits, I, an *Arch-heretick*
 “ king, pick up as many as I can catch ;
 “ and,

“ and, perhaps, I may be courted, one
 “ day or other, to give some of them
 “ back again.*”

Frederick did not take any notice of the hunting of Ex-Jesuits, which begun at Berlin, about the end of his reign.— Long before he knew full well what was worth knowing, with respect to this matter. In the year 1771, he told Baron Horst, that the Ex-Jesuits had established in France, free-masons lodges, because the French government, under the severest penalties, had interdicted all assemblies of Ex-Jesuits, consisting of more than three. The chief end of these establishments, no doubt, was to preserve what they could save out of the shipwreck of their order, and to concert the

* Mémoire sur le Roi de Prusse, Frederick le Grand, par le Prince de Ligne, page 53 & 54.

the best measures for that purpose.— Very likely they might hope to attain more ends than one by this medley of free-masonry and Jesuitism. All the free-masons at least, whom they received, got the tonsure, and really became Jesuits. Thus the late and present Duke of Orleans, the elector of Bavaria, (as I have been assured) and many a free-mason in Germany became tonsured. Though Frederick knew all this, he did, however, not notice at all the hunting of Ex-Jesuits raised in his dominions.

Much greater astonishment, was excited over all Germany, by his endeavours to draw the Jesuits, banished from Roman Catholic countries, into his kingdom. M. Birkenstock, at Vienna, a gentleman equally distin-

distinguished for his talents and sentiments, speaks in a very favourable manner of this design, in his Latin eulogy of Frederick the Great. He thinks, the Jesuits have never more proved their cunning and artfulness, than by avoiding Frederick's snare. But the whole concatenation of these events, which I learnt from Baron Horst, is totally different from what Mr. Birkenstock supposes it to be.

At that glorious and memorable period, when Pope Ganganelli began to urge the dissolution of the order, a Mr. Dobriluck, formerly colonel in the Imperial service, came to the king. In his youth he had entered that order, and afterwards, without taking the dress and vow, remained attached to it; which was very common at that time. Dobriluck
proposed

proposed to the king, " That he should
 " give the oppressed Jesuits full pro-
 " tection and security in his dominions,
 " and these in requital would establish
 " in some Prussian port, the most exten-
 " sive and profitable commerce with
 " China, ever carried on by any Euro-
 " pean nation with that country. At
 " the Court of Peking they had the
 " greatest influence and rank of Man-
 " darins; and as for the means requisite
 " for undertaking the most important
 " enterprizes, the Jesuits knew very
 " well where to find them."

The King approved the proposal, and
 agreed to all its conditions; but, in the
 progress of the business, it transpired
 very soon, that Dobriluck was sent to the
 king, not by Ricci, the general of the
 Jesuits, but by father Romberg, their
 well-

well-known prefect in Germany. Ricci would have nothing to do with any such plan. In the true character of a monk, he said, "his order was in the most distressed and abandoned situation; he scarcely knew how to find subsistence for his poor brethren driven out from Portugal and Spain, and was, of course, very far from thinking of great commercial speculations." Soon after Ricci was imprisoned in the fort of St. Ange. Among his papers were found all the shrove-tickets of Mary Theresa, which, contrary to the laws and discipline of the Roman Catholick church, by her Jesuitic confessor were constantly and regularly sent to Ricci. Ganganelli sent all these tickets to the Empress, who, enraged by this shameful conduct, not only withdrew her protection from Ricci

Ricci and his order, but also suppressed it in all her dominions, in a manner so severe and contradictory to the religious turn of the pious mind of Mary Theresa, that no one who did not know the history of the shrove-tickets could account for it.

Frederick's favourable disposition towards the Jesuits, took rise amidst the terrors and dangers of the seven years war, when the enthusiasm and wild religious phrenzy of the Roman Catholick mob, acted and fought so powerfully against him. In this war, while the triple-crowned blockhead at Rome inspired all the German ecclesiastic princes with the same phrenzy, the Jesuits in Breslaw distinguished themselves by true generosity and Prussian patriotism. After the battle of Breslaw, lost by the duke of Bevern, a great number of wounded Prussians

Prussians were carried to that town. The Jesuits entreated the Austrian general's permission to receive and nurse these poor abandoned Prussians. They got this permission, and evacuated almost the whole of their spacious monastery for the benefit of these unfortunate men, whom they treated with the utmost kindness. This happened before the battle of Leuthen, and, consequently, at a time when no one could suppose that the king ever again would be master of Breslaw. Frederick never forgot this generous and loyal conduct of the Jesuits in Breslaw. Many a time he said in the presence of Baron Horst, from whom I learned this trait of Frederick's character: " I care
" as little for the disputes of the Jesuits
" with the Roman church and so many
" courts, as for their religious contro-
" versies

“verfies and errors. On feveral occa-
 “fions, the Jefuits in my dominions have
 “behaved like good citizens and loyal
 “fubjects, and for this reason it is in-
 “cumbent on me to protect them.”

Influenced by thefe sentiments, Frederick formed the plan of eftablifhing a Roman Catholic bifhoprick at Xanten, in the duchy of Cleves, where a great many inhabitants are of that religion, and in religious matters, fubject to foreign bifhops. He was the more difpofed to execute this plan, as he faw the Emperor’s intention of taking away from the German bifhops all their diocefes. During the Pope’s ftay in Germany, Frederick fent the *Abbé du Val-Pyrcau*, to compliment him in Bavaria, and to treat with him about their bifhoprics. But this *Abbé*, a man proud
 and

and upstart, and long odious to the court of Rome for his heretical writings, behaved with so much insolence in his negotiations with the Pope, that he complained bitterly against him. Struck with these complaints, the King, for that time, gave up his plan. But, as not only in the duchy of Cleves, but also in the Prussian part of Gueldern, there is a great number of Roman Catholics, subject in matters of religion to the Austrian bishop at Ruremonde, it may be executed at some other time, especially as the Pope has now a *Chargé des affaires* in Berlin, and the King of Prussia one in Rome.

After the seven years war, a zealous, pious and stupid Count Moncada, went from Vienna to Berlin, with an intention to convert the King to the Roman Catholic

tholic faith. Moncada got (I hope not for this purpose) the history of the life and miracles of Saint Theresa, printed in four different languages. It is easy to conceive how Frederick must have laughed at this missionary. More yet he certainly laughed, when he gave Clement the Thirteenth to understand, that he wished to become a Roman Catholic. This crowned priest deserved such sarcasms, for sending a consecrated cap and sword to field-marshal Daun, in compliment of his having defeated the Prussians near Hochkirchen. The same sarcasm was repeated, when the King wanted to engage in his service the Benedictine Monk Pernetty, and to get for him, from the Pope, leave to wear a secular dress. This business was conducted by Bastiani, who assured the Pope, that,

as

as Frederick had a great mind to embrace the Roman Catholic religion, and no one was abler to complete his conversion, than a man of such deep and extensive learning as Pernetty, it would be a matter of conscience to refuse him that leave, which the King's insuperable aversion from every kind of monkish dress, made absolutely necessary. The Pope did not think proper to endanger his soul, by obstructing such a brilliant prospect to the church of God, dispensed with Pernetty's wearing his Benedictine dress, created him Abbot of Burgel *in partibus infidelium*, and complimented the new Abbot with a monstrous golden cross, and a large gold ribband.

CHAP.

C H A P. XIV.

On a fundamental Principle of Frederick's internal State, æconomy, and some strange Assertions of the Censurers of this great King.

“**A** KING ought to act, as if he never should die,” said Frederick to Baron Horst, at the close of a conversation, that concerned the draining of a large marshy tract near the Oder, and the colonizing of this tract.—When Baron Horst had communicated to the king his ideas about this scheme, he answered, “Very well; but now
 “we must endeavour to proceed farther. Suppose we establish this
 “year

" this year four hundred families, the
 " next we must settle six hundred, the
 " third eight hundred, the fourth, per-
 " haps, twelve hundred, and so forth;
 " after twenty years time, that will
 " make a fine number ! But, sir, why
 " do you stare ? I know your thoughts.
 " There is an extravagant old man, you
 " think, who, perhaps, counts to live
 " till the very end of this century ; how-
 " ever, let me tell you, that I do not
 " hope to live two years longer. But
 " you must know, that in the place
 " where I am, we must act as if we never
 " should die."*

VOL. I.

N

This

* " Cela est excellent, et maintenant il faut tacher
 " d'aller en avant. Si cette année nous établissons
 " quatre cent familles, il faut la suivante aller à six
 " cent, ensuite à douze cent, peut-être ; après vingt
 " ans

This sublime and remarkable saying contained a fundamental principle of Frederick's internal state œconomy. Vast were all his undertakings for the improvement of his dominions. Notwithstanding their great variety and number, they were all so fruitful and thriving, that we cannot, without the greatest astonishment, hear one of his ecclesiastic counsellors say: " Though the King has
 " assisted his subjects to the amount of
 " many, many millions, when they had
 " sustained severe losses from wars,
 " floods,

" ans cela fera un beau nombre—Or, que me re-
 " gardez-vous, Monsieur ? Je vois ce que vous pensez !
 " Voilà un vieillard bien extravagant, qui compte
 " vivre, peut-être, jusqu' à la fin du Siècle. Je dois
 " vous dire, que je ne compte point avoir encore
 " deux ans à vivre. Mais sachez, que dans la place
 " où je suis, il faut agir, comme si l'on ne mourroit
 " jamais."

" floods, bad harvests, and other mis-
 " fortunes, the country people in most
 " of the provinces, during his reign,
 " were still impoverishing more and
 " more.*" This counsellor, I am told,
 picked up by far the greatest part of his
 information of this kind, in conversa-
 tions he heard in a tavern at Berlin, call-
 ed the New World, which he visited
 every day at a certain hour. But, if the
 gentlemen of this New World should
 wish to establish the glaring paradox,
 that, during Frederick's reign, the coun-
 try people in the Prussian dominions were
 impoverishing more and more, it would
 be their province, not only to prove
 their assertion, but also to remove all the
 N 2 insuperable

* Character of Frederick the Second, by Mr. Bush-
 ing, page 306.

insuperable facts and arguments to the contrary.

Even with all the stupid credulity of a Capuchin Monk, it must be impossible to believe, that a country is declining or sinking deeper in poverty, when the interest of money sinks under half its former amount, the number of its inhabitants is uncommonly increasing, the cultivation of waste lands every where encouraged and promoted with the most ardent zeal, and an incredible number of houses and other buildings constantly raising.

The lowest class of tributaries in the Prussian provinces was certainly not impoverished under this reign. But this groundless rumour originated with the pedlars and hawkers, sometimes also with the merchants, because Frederick did

not

not think proper to free commerce and trade from that restraint, which he found necessary for the purpose of supporting and promoting agriculture and manufactories in his dominions. And this same way it reached the gentlemen of the New World, and M. Bushing.

Count Mirabeau goes yet greater lengths than these gentlemen, by endeavouring to prove, in his work on the Prussian monarchy, "that the thriving condition of the most flourishing Prussian provinces was so great, for this reason only, that by the management of their concerns, the king had quite laid aside his general principles of government." It is not possible to pass a severer censure on Frederick's administration, and therefore it is necessary

N 3. to

to subject it to a strict scrutiny and examination.

The flourishing state of the Westphalian provinces is ascribed by Count Mirabeau, to the liberty of commerce, and their exemption from that fiscatine system, which, with respect to the excise, the salt-regale, post-duties and tolls, incumbered the other Prussian provinces. But this is the most glaring untruth. For it is obvious to every one, that in the Prussian part of Westphalia, during Frederick's reign, commerce and trade laboured under much greater restraints than in any other part of his dominions.

He thought proper to try the experiment if these provinces, so separate and parted from each other, could be connected into a more advantageous system, by invariably fixing the sum of their taxes,

taxes, or introducing, as they call it, a direct impost. A fixed excise seemed to be the best means of making this experiment, which was consequently done in the years 1766 and 1767, by a regulation which subjected the largest family to no more than a monthly quota, never exceeding three dollars; and poor families only to a monthly payment of eighteen groschen,* and even a smaller sum. But a short experience was sufficient to prove, what a difference there is between the direct paying of a fixed tax, and the imperceptible contribution from consumption and trade. A general outcry against the new system, obliged the king very soon, to the former way of levying the excise. The merchants and traders alone

* About two shillings English money.

alone continued to pay a fixed sum, under the proviso, that all the country people, in the Prussian part of Westphalia, were obliged to buy whatever they wanted from the inhabitants of Prussian towns, whereby they were exposed to heavy penalties, and put under a much more vexatious fiscaline system than in all the other Prussian provinces. With respect to the salt-regale, tolls, and post-duty, they were likewise much more harassed, and even the tax called tobacco-money, was paid by them at a higher rate than by other Prussian subjects; and though those in other provinces, by the abolishing of the general tobacco administration, have got some relief respecting the tobacco-tax, the Westphalians still continue to pay the same as before.

Nothing,

Nothing, therefore, under the sun, can equal the impudent rashness with which Count Mirabeau ascribes the more flourishing state of the Prussian dominions in Westphalia, to their not being subject to the same fisceline hardships as the other provinces; nothing, I say, is equal to this impudence but his ignorance, which is so much the greater, as the fantastic dreams of the French economists have never been any where more forcibly refuted by incontrovertible experience, than in these Prussian provinces in Westphalia,

Their greater population and wealth are produced by causes altogether different from what Mirabeau suspected, and these are :

First, The spinning of flaxen yarn, and weaving of linen, which are of such importance,

portance, that the county of Ravensberg alone, on an average, annually exports more than a million dollars worth of linen and flaxen yarn; and in this county, where every hand spins or weaves, more than six thousand people live on each German square mile.

Secondly, The great sum of foreign money imported every year into the Prussian part of Westphalia, by the immense number of young people going in the spring to Holland, there to work for very high wages, and bringing a great part of their money home, for the support of their families. More than thirty thousand people go annually from the Prussian provinces to Holland, and every one of them, on an average, brings back twenty dollars: from the province of Lingen even girls go to the Dutch bleaching

bleaching places, and each of them earns no less than an hundred florins. A great many people of the province of Minden, and other Prussian dominions in Westphalia, go on the whale fishery, and every one of them clears an hundred dollars, and more.

Fourthly, There are, in the county of Lingen, a class of trading people or pedlars, who travel through Germany, France, Italy, Russia and Sweden, with scissars, knives, and other small commodities. The number of these mercantile adventurers is by no means inconsiderable; for one single merchant at Mettingen, in the county of Lingen, sends out seven hundred of them.

In the fifth place, The exemption of the Westphalian provinces from the cantoning system, for supplying the army with

with recruits, contributes much to their wealth and flourishing state,

And lastly, They enjoy many advantages from their different situations. Thus East Frizia gets a great deal of money by rearing cattle, dealing in horses, and its commercial maritime intercourse with Holland. The Rhine grants the same advantages to the duchy of Cleves; and the Maese to the province of Guelders. Minden exports a great quantity of corn; and the sole district of Rhuden sends annually, to the value of thirty thousand dollars, wooden ladles, trays, and other such trifles to Holland.

All this is truth, certain, undeniable truth, though Count Mirabeau and his Berlin informers, count quite otherwise. The uncommon industry of their inhabitants, is the principal cause of the
wealth

wealth and prosperous condition of the Prussian provinces in Westphalia, and not that air-drawn one of Count Mirabeau, that in these provinces Frederick deviated from his general principles of government.

Like groundless with this assertion is another; namely, that Frederick had never favoured these provinces, nor given them money or any particular support. Even in the year 1785, he forgave them the whole of their contribution, once for three, and again for four months. When the town of Emden sustained the misfortune of the sea sweeping away a part of the rising ground, on which stands one part of the town-wall and the burial place, the king gave them eight and twenty thousand dollars for the necessary repairs. Fre-

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derick has done innumerable benevolent acts, that he wished not to have blazed abroad, which are forgotten, or only remembered by some grateful minds. Prussia, says Count Mirabeau, was, forty-six years together, in disgrace with Frederick;* yet, however, (to mention only one instance of thousands), he added to the population of that country, since the death of his father, thirteen thousand families of new inhabitants.

Censoriousness, chattering ignorance, self-interest, and envy, have told us unnumbered tales of the fruitlessness of Frederick's endeavours to improve his country. Thus they pretend to say, that the many colonies planted by him were useless, and productive of no advantage. But is it of no advantage to a country, when

* *Histoire secrète de la Cour de Berlin.* Vol. II. p. 90.

when industrious people live and prosper in places where, before, a herd of wretched fishermen hardly got a miserable livelihood? Is it useless to meliorate sands, too barren even for sheep-walks, into good tillage ground? Does a country, that chiefly subsists and flourishes through manufactories, reap no benefit from an increase of population in general, and especially of the number of the most necessary artificers and handicrafts?

Count Mirabeau goes so far as to attempt to prove, "that Frederick, during his reign, had not increased the number of his people; but that, on the contrary, population had not advanced even in the proportion of its natural progression;" and to succeed in this attempt, he professes to conceive that the population of the Prussian dominions, as

Frederick found it on his accession to the crown, is stated by Count Herzberg in a manner not to be relied upon, as very likely founded on nothing but a numbering of the people, which, he thinks, cannot be but a very doubtful method of ascertaining the population of a country.

The ignorance which the count shews here respecting the Prussian government, is rather ridiculous.

There are three different ways of numbering the people, observed in this state; first, for the purpose of drawing up the historical tables, which state all the different classes of people, their sex, age, trade, &c. under a great variety of distinctions; secondly, for the regulation and control of the salt duties, where nothing is taken notice of but the sex, age, and

and number of people; and in the third place, for the military enrolling-lists, which, even with respect to the female sex, contain as particular and minute a detail as the historical tables.

It were strange indeed, if on all these different enumerations of the people in the Prussian dominions, done by quite different persons and for different purposes, no faithful statement of their number could be founded; and it raises astonishment, how Mirabeau could venture to impugn such a statement on the bare authority of fantastic principles and hypothetical assertions.

From what sources Count Mirabeau has drawn his Berlin information, and of what shameful coffee-house and tavern scandals he has made up his work on the Prussian monarchy, and his Secret History

tory of the Court of Berlin, is now pretty generally known. But how must this gentleman, and his Berlin informers, have smarted, on reading that true and excellent remark, with which one of his most ingenious and candid reviewers, Professor Spitler, at Gottingen, concludes his critic of the first of those frothy works: “In France they will now fancy they have got a thorough and exact knowledge of the supposed brittle frame of the Prussian government. On the pretended discoveries of weakness in that monarchy, made by Count Mirabeau, perhaps even the French ministry may rely one day or other; and lo! they have seen the time already, when they found the Marquis of Brandenburg the very reverse of their calculations.”

END OF VOLUME FIRST.

ERRATA IN VOL. I.

Page 15, line 11, for *which* read *yet*—p. 17, Note l. 3,
 for *comparoient* read *comparurent*—p. 86, l. 18, for *par-
 coura* read *parcoursu*—p. 101, l. 11, for *debauiour* read
behaviour—p. 114, Note l. 13, for *follow* read *allow*—
 p. 153, Note l. 13, for *met a phyfical* read *metaphyfical*—
 p. 154, Note l. 1, for *government* read *governments*—
 p. 163, l. 20, for *to do* read *ado*—p. 166, l. 8, for
chainshot read *grapeshot*—p. 181, l. 14 & 15, for *and
 had got very confiderable, he retired,* read *he got a very
 confiderable pension, and lived much refpected in Berlin*—
 p. 181, l. 12, for *caught at* read *caught*—p. 183, l. 6,
 for *Bactshifaria* read *Bactshiferay*—p. 184, l. 11, for
trifling read *tilting*—p. 184, l. 14 & 15, for *but in the
 hands* read *but tools in the hands*—p. 185, l. 4 & 5, for *with
 reflection* read *by this reflexion*—p. 185, l. 5, for *mark*
read give—p. 187, l. 4, for *maame* read *madame*—
 p. 188, l. 14, for *Cbandemago* read *Cbandernagor*—
 p. 191, l. 17, for *monarchial* read *monarchical*.

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